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# HOME AND FOREIGN SERVICE ;

OR,

Pictures in Active Christian Life.

"HIS SERVANTS SHALL SERVE HIM."

LONDON :  
JAMES NISBET AND CO., BERNERS STREET.

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TO ALL WHO WITH LOVING REVERENCE

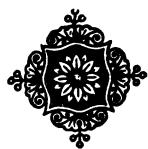
HAVE TAKEN SERVICE IN

*The Great Vineyard,*

AND LABOUR THERE, IN FAITHFUL

OBEDIENCE, PATIENCE, ACTIVITY, OR REST;

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED.



## P R E F A C E.

**I**T is especially wished that those about to read these pages should know beforehand what they contain. That they have never been intended for an imitation of the popular stories of the day ; and are written by one wanting as much the wish as the talent to be a sensation writer. Neither do they lay claim to any new or deep line of thought. They are detached pictures, and pictures only, of some phases in active Christian life ; and their aim has been to shew to the young the moving springs of much they see good and beautiful around them, in the hope that, allured by the fair smile of duty, and the beauty of Christian virtue, they may seek to follow in the path of the one, and

shew in their own lives all the graces of the other. Not a few of their elders, if any such take up the book, will fit the frame-work to other forms, and find in many quiet English homes the originals of our sketches.



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## CHAPTER I.

### *A Tale that is Ended.*

Gather them back, ye mighty years,  
That bring the woods their leaves ;  
Back from life's unreturning streams,  
Back from the graves that haunt our dreams.  
And the living lost, from whose lips our names  
Have passed, as the song of greener bowers,  
And the tones of happier years from ours ;  
From all the faith that cleaves  
To the broken reeds of this changeful clime ;  
Gather them back, restoring time.

—F. BROWN.

THERE are probably few who have passed the age of childhood incapable of taking up in echo, to a greater or less degree, the feeling of these lines ; few whom the past has not left in some measure subject to the mysterious power which the commonest word or tones may have on the heart. Sounds which vibrated on our hearing, only to be forgotten in the presence of the succeeding one, have perhaps stirred to its depth the soul of some one beside us ; while again, when others have hurried on, unheeding



the voices which fill the air, some one among these, trivial and unnoticed by the many, has, it may be, arrested us with a spell all its own; opening, as by a magic touch, some of the shrines where are treasured memories, of which the world has seldom heard, or heard only to forget—our silver shrines, far down beyond the turmoil, and the wear, and the fret-work of life, which we seldom visit, save when, secure from interruption, we can “enter in, and shut the door.” Well for us if no idol have ever been enthroned there; if, remembering the overshadowing presence in which we stand, we can yet feel that it is “holy ground.”

From remembrances such as these, come histories, where, mingled with forms and voices of the past, are others which have taken their places as bygone memories, leaving behind them records of rest, attained after much labour, peace after sorrow, victory after conflict.

“Footprints, that perhaps another,  
Sailing o’er life’s solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing, shall take heart again.”

We speak of the past of many years ago, when the interior of a room in the fashionable school of Mrs Haye, at Grantly, presented a scene full of life and animation.

It was a well furnished apartment, of good size, to which a cheerful fire imparted warmth and

brightness. Two lamps at opposite sides of the room gave light to several young girls, who were busily occupied. The time was about five o'clock on a cold December day, and the object in hand appeared to be packing up to go home for the Christmas vacation. Beside the fire, a little apart from the others, and evidently the eldest in the room, stood a young girl, whose appearance at once attracted attention. There was a look of pleasant cheerfulness about her, which would lead any one addressing her to expect a bright and cheerful answer. Her figure was tall and finely proportioned; dark flashing eyes, black hair, confined in neat braids over a high forehead, a mouth that spoke alike of determination and self-will, were the distinguishing characteristics of the face. The whole bearing was that of one who feared nothing, and who would say to those more timid, "Lean on me, for I am strong."

She was earnestly talking to a companion, in all respects seemingly a contrast to herself. Many might pass by Adela Edgerton without noticing the sweetness and calm which pervaded her whole being; which had nothing of her school-fellow's brilliancy. Though of the same age, and nearly as tall, her figure was slight, and gave no great idea of strength; her grey eyes had none of the fire which shot from the black ones, and her chestnut hair, which was also braided, had a soft character, assorting well with her whole appearance.

There was just colour enough in her cheeks to prevent the impression being conveyed of extreme delicacy ; but though a casual observer would have assigned to Adela sweetness and gentleness, yet action and assistance would probably have been sought from the bright-eyed damsel whom we have placed first upon our roll of memories. It was pleasant to see them as they stood ; so different, and yet with so much of promise about each. They were like two goodly trees ; should their leaf wither, or should the work of their hands prosper ? The one, as the young oak, sturdy and vigorous ; yet the vine, that from infancy to old age needs support, the dependent vine, maketh glad the heart of man ; and the light birch, that gently bendeth, has its peculiar quality of endurance ; it is one of the few trees which can bear a great intensity of cold.

How is it that youth feels so little the special brightness of its position ? How is it that those only who have passed the spring-time of life know what it is to be young ? The little child's laugh thrills us with its exceeding gladness, but its thoughts are looking to the time when childhood shall be exchanged for the rank and privileges of older years. Among the busy group we have mentioned, the happiness of not a few rested on the knowledge that their earliest days were passing by, bringing them, as they imagined, to something far better.

"And so, Adela," said the dark-eyed girl, "here we are at the last day, to which we have so long looked forward; and Monsieur Pirouette has really made his last bow to us at least, and Signor Goldo conjugated his final verb; and yet, Adela, you do not seem so glad as I am to be free."

"I have been here so long, Eleanor, and have received so much kindness, that it would be very ungrateful did I feel no regret at leaving many who have been so good to me; and who knows when I may ever see any of them again?"

"And yet," rejoined her companion, "you only came to Grantly a short time before myself; how well I remember the first evening when I arrived, feeling so miserable; how you came forward, and asked me to sit by you, and did all you could to cheer the poor stranger."

"I had felt so desolate myself, on first leaving home, Eleanor, that it seemed but natural to try and comfort another; it was a long time before I was at all happy, or thought I could like any place without mamma."

"Ah! you had one, I had none to go back to; but Adela, I want to know what Mrs Hays said to you to-day, when she sent for you, as she always does those who are leaving, to speak to them alone?"

"She said a very few words, but they were very kind; that she should like sometimes to hear of me, and was glad to think, I should be able to be

useful to mamma, who is so delicate ; besides this, she gave me a book, in remembrance of days which she hoped had not been altogether unpleasant or unprofitable."

"You always were a favourite, Adela, and deserved it too, so do not think I envy you. Mrs Haye had a great deal more to say to me, and she hoped I would remember that what might have been learnt here, was to enable me to continue the self-education, which could terminate only with one's life ; you see I have not forgotten what was said. Mrs Haye evidently considers my education far from complete, and I really believe her only regret at my leaving is, that after all her pains, there should go forth to the world so crude and unfinished a specimen of her school as Eleanor Harcourt."

"Dear Eleanor, do not throw away good friends who really wish you well, merely because the advice it is their duty to give, wounds your self-love, which would rather be thought perfect."

"You are an odd girl, Adela, too grave and wise for me ; but it does not much signify now what Mrs Haye thinks, for ——." The rest of the sentence remained unspoken, the attention of both having been arrested by a sudden exclamation, from a younger girl in another part of the room, of, "How very strange !"

"What is so very strange, Emily?" said Eleanor, turning round ; "I should feel quite curious, were

it not that you so often meet with things altogether remarkable and new."

The girl rose from her knees with a flushed face, and putting back the hair which had fallen over a bright and sunny countenance, pointed in rather a tragic manner, with one hand, to a small black box over which she had been bending. "It is very strange," said she, "I have been trying this half hour to shut it, and yet there is nothing more in it now than when I brought it."

"Your only chance, Emily," exclaimed the laughing voice of another of her companions who had joined them, "your only chance is to ask Anne Jones to sit upon your trunk till tea time; no persuasion less weighty will close it. I can see Emily has been packing her trunk," she continued, as Adela approached them, "on principle."

"The principle does not appear to have been successful," answered Adela; "I think, Emily, you will have to try some other way of making your trunk hold all you wish to put into it."

"Well, you know, Adela, you must have heard Mrs Hays say, a little time ago, when we were dusting the bookshelves, that the proper way was to begin at the highest shelf, on the left hand side; and she said that the sure way of doing things well, was to have a method and a principle on which we acted, instead of going to work anyhow. And when Mr Marly gave us our last drawing lesson, he told me just the same; always begin to

put on your colour for the sky, from the highest part of your paper, on the left hand side, so —”

“So,” chimed in her tormentor, Augusta Smith, “as I said before, Emily has followed out the left to right principle, from whence it happens that at the bottom of the trunk come the collars; you know they were in the top drawer, left hand side; then came in order, just let me look, Emily,—Yes! I am quite right, then came the clean bonnet cap, just as it ought to be; but how the boots come into the system above it, is what I do not quite understand; well, then follow in proper order, handkerchiefs, cloaks, dresses, and at top the linen of course, because it came out of the lowest drawer. One may decidedly call the box a specimen of principle well carried out.”

A cloud came over poor Emily's face, and she seemed on the point of returning an angry answer, when Adela averted the storm by saying gently,

“I daresay, Emily, you never packed a box before, and Augusta might as well have helped you instead of laughing at your difficulties; as I have packed a great many, suppose we try if two are not better than one;” and she suited the action to the word.

“Nay, Adela,” exclaimed Augusta, “you shall not go away and think me an ill-natured girl, so let me help Emily; “you will forgive me, will you not,” said she to the latter, kissing her. “I am sorry I laughed, but indeed it was so droll I could

not help it; we must make haste, or the tea bell will ring before we are ready."

"We will all help," said Adela, "and then every thing will be finished sooner;" and the three proceeded to re-pack the trunk, Adela taking the direction, and superintending the younger ones. It was a work of some time, and she would probably have got through the task much sooner without assistance; but it was good for Emily to learn for future occasions, and that Augusta should have the opportunity of atoning for any pain she might have caused. Adela therefore was chief directress, and where the girls were at a loss, or any article was refractory, it was wonderful how her quiet touch seemed to make all come right. She was smoothing down the collars, and a few light things at the top, which had rather differed from their former position, when Emily suddenly exclaimed, with her usual energy, "Oh, Adela, what shall we do without you?"

"Very well, I hope, Emily," was the answer; "you will find it a very good thing to have to help yourself in many things for which you have come to me; and besides, you must not forget, it is becoming your turn now to help, instead of being helped. I should like to know that you determined, when you came back, to be a friend and adviser for good, to all those younger than yourself, who want assistance; and you may sometimes, though not so often, be able to give it even to those who



are older. Just pass me that handkerchief to put at the top, and see, the trunk locks quite easily now ; how very strange, is it not, Emily ?

“ You are laughing at me, Adela, dear good Adela,” said the little girl, with tears in her eyes at the thought of losing her friend.

“ Dear me, Emily !” exclaimed Eleanor, who was still standing by the fire, whence she had looked on, her tall figure seeming to throw a shade over the group she had been watching, with an air which would have suited Juno, gazing on the actions of beings who were less than goddesses : “ Dear me, Emily ! I believe you are going to cry ; I wonder if any one is sorry that I am going away as well as Adela.”

“ Oh yes, Eleanor !” exclaimed the child innocently, “ we are all sorry ; we shall want you every day when we feel merry. No one plays *les graces*, or battledore and shuttlecock, as well as you ; but,” and her look went back to its former object, “ we shall always want Adela when we are in trouble.”

Eleanor felt the distinction drawn, but she was not one to confess having been hit by a chance shot, and that too from a child, so she only replied :

“ Well, it is lucky people are not all the same, and that there are some who like shade as well as sun, else there would be no room for every one’s talents ; so I am content to take my share of the sorrow, and leave Adela hers.”

At this moment the bell rang for tea, and found

Emily hardly prepared for the summons ; yet but few seconds elapsed before her light step was heard on the stairs, following her companions, who had preceded her. Every one had taken their place by the time Emily reached the room ; there was some conversation going on, for on the occasion of the last evening, the customary regulations were always slightly relaxed, and the tea table of the day before the holidays usually gave token of the coming event by greater animation than marked its quiet course during the half-year. Adela was sitting at the lower end of the table, by Mrs Hays ; Eleanor had said rightly, that she was a favourite with that lady.

If, however, it might be allowed that Mrs Hays had occasional partialities, she nevertheless dealt justly, and kindly, by all committed to her care. Eleanor knew this from her own experience, and no one would have borne more ample testimony to the fact than the spirited yet honourable girl, in whose character truth at least was a prevailing element. If at times nettled by what she thought a lower appreciation of her worth than she fancied was deserved, she was still ready to confess that it was because she had not approached the standard which Mrs Hays had pointed out to her. With a sincere respect for her instructress, Eleanor had her own private visions of becoming something far beyond the worthy, but too humble individual, such, as she imagined, it was wished she should

become. She looked forward to the day in which her deeds should astonish Mrs Haye, and lead her to wonder how such superior excellence had been overlooked by her watchful eyes. Perhaps the feeling had seldom been so strong as on this particular evening; and looking across at Adela's gentle face, her unuttered soliloquy ran thus: "She is just suited to help little girls in trouble, but she can never be great." Eleanor's dignity was far above frittering itself away in such a trifle as packing a school girl's trunk.

The rest of the evening, though usually a time of study, was to-night appropriated as each best pleased; and to judge by the merry voices, and the occasional choruses of laughter, there was not much of sadness or gloom in the school-room at Grantly. Many little gifts were to be presented, and both Eleanor and Adela were soon surrounded with keepsakes, which were great in value, when measured by the hearty warmth of good wishes with which they were offered.

At eight o'clock, the whole party assembled for the duty of evening prayer, which was read by Mrs Haye as usual; at the conclusion, a pause ensued, and few present were ignorant of the cause. It was always Mrs Haye's custom, on the occasion of any pupil leaving her care, to offer up a special petition on their behalf, and it therefore caused no surprise when the same voice continued as follows:

"And we particularly implore Thy Fatherly

care for those who are about to leave our quiet family, and enter on the duties of life; may they ever remember, in whatever circumstances they may be placed, that they are servants bought with a price, more precious than gold or silver. Grant that they may walk in faith, in hope, and in love, having, through Thy grace, a right judgment in all things, well regulated feelings, and the spirit of a sound mind, that they may thus, of Thy mercy, so pass through things temporal, that finally they fail not to attain things eternal; for Christ's sake."

The speaker ceased, and many voices present added "Amen" to the prayer: Eleanor's among them in her peculiar, clear, and full-toned accents. Her proud spirit was touched; she felt, true love had prayed, that she might be kept from the evil to come, and that it must be a good thing to be such a servant. Yes! she too would serve the Lord; it was her will, she had strength to do it, and the world should see what kind and measure of service would be hers! No voice rose from the kneeling figure beside her, and Omniscience alone saw the tear on the cheek, or heard the vow registered in that hour by the heart, of Adela Edgerton.

The next morning was one of stirring action, instead of impressions; there were many things to be finished, arranged, and thought of, many farewells, and some tears from Emily, when the time arrived for taking leave of Adela; but all came to a conclusion, and before another evening,

an unusual silence had settled down on the rooms lately so full of life and energy. Each had gone her way, to make one of the peculiar circle opened to receive her ; some of them will meet again in this world, but the path of others is parted till the day when all shall "appear before the judgment-seat, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."



## CHAPTER II.

### A New Life begins.

"The mother gave in tears and pain,  
The flowers she most did love ;  
She knew she should find them all again,  
In the fields of light above.

"Oh, not in cruelty, not in wrath,  
The reaper came that day,—  
'Twas an angel visited the green earth,  
And took the flowers away."

—LONGFELLOW.

OF all the young party who broke up for the Christmas holidays, of which we have been speaking, none went to such different homes as Eleanor Harcourt and Adela Edgerton. No two positions could be more unlike, on this their first entrance into life; and yet, perhaps, had each been allowed to choose, she would have selected something very much like the path on which she found herself placed at the outset of her new career. Eleanor would have craved a brilliant portion; Adela, what had long been hers, a quiet and a loving home.

As it is with these two (so different in character, yet, by the ordering of wisely ruled events, thrown together in their younger years, and subjected for a time at least to the same influences) that our history has to do, we must ask permission to go back beyond the time when we first lingered in Mrs Haye's schoolroom, and speak of things which had taken place many years previously.

Adela Edgerton's father was a lawyer of good repute and practice at the English bar; without being one of those whose talents mark them early as candidates for legal honours, he occupied a position in his profession which was above mediocrity, and was regarded by all as a man to be respected and esteemed. The young lawyer was of too sociable a disposition to be contented longer than was necessary with solitary chambers, of dinners with his friends; so soon, therefore, as his means warranted the proceeding, he took an unpretending but comfortable house, and brought home as its mistress one whom he had known and admired for some years. If a few dinners were lost, now that he was no longer a single man, he thought they would be amply compensated by the sunshine of his own fireside.

Mr Edgerton was not mistaken; he found what he had hoped for, and was never, at any future period, disturbed by vain regrets. He had inherited nothing from his father; Mrs Edgerton brought but little towards the new establishment,

and as therefore prudence required that out of professional means provision should also be made for the future, the household of the young couple was regulated on a quiet scale, and though devoid of any approach to meanness, was of an unpretending character, and subject to the rules of well-ordered economy. Before very long there were added to the happy home young faces and merry voices; children were given and received as blessings; first Adela, whom we already know, and then two more, a boy and a girl, with every promise about them of growing up in health and beauty.

There seemed no cloud on their horizon, and to human eyes, perhaps, it might have appeared as though no cause could be found for any, as the two went on their way, "doing justly and uprightly, and walking humbly with their God."

But a winter of unusual severity was followed by a cold and blasting spring; the old and the delicate suffered from both, and among children an unusual amount of epidemic disease prevailed. The household of the Edgertons was not passed over in the general visitation; first Adela drooped, and then the little brother and sister; their complaint was measles in its worst form, and at the end of a week, the mother looked in sorrow on the three little beds, and knew not which of her children would be taken from her first.

The reaper was indeed that spring binding the flowers in his sheaves for the Lord of paradise.



The two youngest he bore away before long, the parents humbly hoped, to a brighter and a warmer love than even they had to bestow. But one remained, the sentence of life or death still hung suspended; and the mother, though enabled to say, "It is well," yet added the petition that the life of this little one might be granted to her. That prayer was heard, and when Adela's weary eyes first opened again to consciousness, they met those of her watching mother, as bending to kiss the pale wan face, she murmured a thanksgiving for the mercy vouchsafed to her.

And with returning health and strength, it was not to be wondered at that the mother and child drew more closely together; for though Adela's infant mind could understand little of the grave from which she had been given back, or of the heaven to which her playfellows were gone, yet she was remarkable from this time for a gentle gravity and thoughtfulness, which grew with her growth, and strengthened with her years. Her full bloom, too, never returned, and though far from sickly or pining, she wore for the rest of her life a look of delicacy which deceived those who did not know her as to her real amount of strength. To her, now an only one, there was given a double share of love; and though, after some years, others filled the vacant places, yet from the difference of age, these were but infants in the nursery, whilst Adela was daily becoming more and more the companion

of her parents. There was but one grief in that peaceful household ; after the birth of her youngest child, a bright haired girl, Mrs Edgerton never regained her health or strength ; it seemed as if the vigour of her life had passed to her infant—of all her children, the one who shewed most liveliness and gaiety of spirit. She had received at the font the name of Mary, but among her brothers and sisters, her nursery appellation, as soon as she could speak, was “ The singing bird.”

Before, however, she was a twelvemonth old, it became evident that something more than the measures hitherto adopted were necessary for Adela, who had now attained her fourteenth year. Mrs Edgerton had no longer time or energy to devote the attention to her which the growing girl required ; and the nursery-governess, who managed the little schoolroom, was not competent to take an older pupil. Besides all this, it was plain it would be better to remove her for a time from the atmosphere in which she had been reared, and place her in one which should be more bracing both in mind and body, and fit her better for the part she must one day take in the world. Knowing nothing but the sunshine and affection of her own home, and having for her immediate companion a quiet and delicate mother, Adela was in danger of being drawn up, as it were, to a hurtful and unnatural degree, and of turning out something little better than a sensitive plant. The

child's good at once decided her parents; much as they themselves dreaded the separation, their own feelings were not for one moment weighed in the balance with her welfare, and in a few weeks, Adela was placed under the care of Mrs Haye at Grantly.

This measure was attended with all the success desired, and amply rewarded the sacrifice. The transition had been wisely and carefully made. The girl was not removed to loneliness and unkindness, but to the cheerful companionship of those who were of her own age, and to the careful instruction of one who combined firmness and sense with a kindness fitted to win the respect and love of her charge. That she gained those of Adela we have seen, and after the first weeks of natural longing for the home she had left, no one profited more than the latter, by the advantages placed within her reach. But while thus endearing herself to her new friends, and proving she knew the value of the present time, the returning holidays were always, both to Mrs Edgerton and Adela, and indeed to the whole party, weeks of the greatest happiness and pleasure. The increasing bloom on her cheek, and the improvement which every few months made in her appearance and proficiency were fondly marked, and gratefully acknowledged, whilst to Adela home seemed to have gained additional charms, from the mere fact of her having for a time lived elsewhere. Such was Adela Edgerton, and such the home to which she

---

was returning, having a few months previously attained the age of seventeen. Was it to be wondered at that it seemed too much happiness to be again with parents who had been her all in all? Or that her heart danced for joy when she arrived in town, and found the faithful old nurse looking out for her with the utmost anxiety?

The drive to Mr Edgerton's house, though not a long one, was sufficient to put her in possession of the leading points of home news, which Nurse was nothing backward to communicate.

"The singing bird," said Nurse, "was becoming prettier and merrier each day;" but Adela looked grave when she heard further that her mother had not gained in strength since Miss Adela went away. It was the only drawback to her perfect happiness, but was forgotten when they stopped at the door, and old William, who had been in the house before she was born, welcomed her home; something would have seemed wanting had he omitted his customary salutation. In another moment she was clasped in a loving embrace, and when that was past, her first question was for the children, who were only too eager to be summoned, for had they not seen the fly arrive? and had not Nurse been upstairs, and said their sister was really come? So in they trooped with shouts of delight, and Adela was nearly smothered with kisses, and throttled by the little arms that hung round her neck. Order was, however, after a time, restored

and Adela obtained a respite, on the terms of having Mary on her knee, one on each side, and two at her feet, by which means every one was considered to have a fair share of the present enjoyment; and so they sat by the winter fire, and cared not for the frost and snow without, whilst hearts were so warm within. Mrs Edgerton was sitting in the easy chair watching the party, and Adela, who suddenly remembered what nurse had said, stole a glance now and then to see how far her words seemed true, but she could detect little difference; if any, there was rather more colour in the cheek, which, when she had left, had been blanched by the summer heat, and feeling altogether relieved, she turned to answer an appeal from George, who was eagerly waiting a reply to his question,

“Were they now going to have Adela for ever, and really all to themselves?”

“Yes, George, I am not going away again; how merry it will be, now that I shall be here to play with you.”

“For ever!” said the singing bird, raising her bright eyes to her sister’s face, “for ever! how nice!”

“And all to ourselves,” added Charlotte; but Adela did not answer, she had caught the sound of a slight sigh near her, and fancied that Mary’s innocent words had been followed by the echo of a lower voice, that seemed to have said, “For ever,

and for ever." She turned towards her mother ; Mrs Edgerton was still leaning back in her chair, but her face was paler than before, and her eldest child wishing to hear her speak, said in answer to the last question—

"Whenever I am not wanted, Charlotte ; but you know, sometimes mamma will have things for me to do, and you would not be selfish enough to want me to play with you then, would you ?"

A chorus in the negative was raised by this appeal, followed by an assurance, "that she could always do as she liked, if only she would play with them when she was quite idle," which Mary, judging by herself, was of opinion would very often be the case.

How great, and how willingly yielded to, is the kingship of a little child ! Adela's small sovereigns were still laying down the law, when Mr Edgerton entered, and his daughter rose to receive and return her father's greeting. The little people having calmed down in their excitement, consented to accompany Nurse to bed, feeling satisfied in the assurance they were henceforth to have an unlimited interest in Adela ; and before their elders returned from the dining-room they were snugly slumbering for the night.

The quiet evening was one of perfect happiness to Adela, who seemed to occupy a new position, as indeed she did, standing on the threshold of womanhood ; and when they parted, she kissed her mother,

saying, "You know, Mamma, I shall not count days any more now that I am come home 'for ever,' as Mary says;" and Mrs Edgerton smiled, and returning the embrace, replied, "I am glad of it, my daughter, for I have often wanted you very much whilst you have been absent from us."

When Adela, that night, in her quiet room, looked back on the past, and forwards to the future, Eleanor would have thought her poor-spirited indeed, had she known how limited was her old companion's ambition, and how small was her desire to be that which, by one at least, had been pronounced impossible for her to be—"great."



## CHAPTER III.

### Retrospection.

I heard the angels say—

Put hours to hours, and days to days, and draw the days to seven,

And God will draw Onora up, by golden cords to heaven ;

Yet have the evil spirits power that purpose to defer ;

For, if *she* hath no need of *Him*, God hath no need of her.

—E. B. BROWNING.

TO Eleanor Harcourt we must now return. We have said no two positions could be more different,—the brilliant, the proud, the sparkling girl was an orphan. Yet her childhood had been far from an unhappy one ; in its memories were, a country home, with all its fresh pleasures, merry play-fellows, and careful teaching ; she had never known, and therefore never missed, a mother's love. Her father was a clergyman, vicar of a country parish in one of the central counties of England famous for its beauty, and Eleanor's home had been among the breezy commons and "unchanging hills" of our native land. She had one brother, some years older than herself. The birth of the



little girl had brought sorrow with it, for whilst her infant existence was yet counted by days, her mother was laid in the quiet churchyard of Holmdale.

Her husband mourned for her quietly but sadly, and confiding the tiny stranger to the care of an experienced and trustworthy nurse, sought in increased activity in his daily work, the best alleviation of his sorrow. The shade which had attended her birth did not rest upon the infant, who gave early token that she inherited her mother's beauty, and was remarkable for her brightness and intelligence. Mrs Evans watched over her with a careful eye, and her brother's devotion to his baby-sister, had in it something that was almost chivalrous. In time, however, John was sent to school, and she only saw him in the holidays; but she and Mrs Evans led a happy life, when there came to pass an event which, for a time, changed the current of everything, and finally altered her whole destiny.

Soon after Mr Harcourt had been appointed to the living of Holmdale, a small house, which had long been vacant, was suddenly taken, and it became evident that the village was soon to boast of another resident. Mrs Harcourt first made the discovery whilst taking a walk, and communicated it to her husband in the evening as a pleasant piece of news.

"They might hope," she said, "as it was a

pretty little place, to have some nice neighbours, and she only trusted they would prove friendly and sociable people."

In about a fortnight after it was known that the new tenant had arrived, and Mrs Harcourt was rather disappointed to find he was an elderly gentleman of grave aspect, who lived alone, and the whole household consisted of a middle-aged woman, who had all the look about her of having long held the position in which she first appeared at Holmdale. It was certainly a disappointment, but still there was hope that even an elderly gentleman might make himself agreeable. Mr Harcourt, as the clergyman of the place, called on the new comer, but was not admitted. A card was left at the vicarage, bearing on it the name of Mr Smith, which was certainly not one likely to give any information. Mr Smith, however, appeared at church, and opinion was decidedly in his favour; Mr Smith's housekeeper likewise attended the service, and the verdict of the lower house, who sat in judgment upon her, was also satisfactory; the one looked "quite a gentleman," the other, "very respectable." Here, however, curiosity came to a standstill; it was perfectly useless to try and discover more; Mr Smith never went beyond his own garden; the neighbouring gentry called, but the answer, "not at home," was always returned, accompanied by an intimation that Mr Smith never paid visits, and would not be able to have the pleasure

of returning the cards ; all invitations to dinner, were also civilly, but invariably declined. The housekeeper was equally impracticable ; she seldom went far from home, and never indulged in gossip ; and on being rather closely pressed once, as to the reason of her master's strange retirement, had answered shortly, " that they had no secrets ; they only lived quietly, and minded their own business, and it would be well if every one did as much." In such a case, therefore, there was nothing more to be said or done ; and the little world at Holmdale were at last obliged to acquiesce in what they could not help, and admit among them the existence of a mystery they could not unravel. In the mean time changes took place at the vicarage, little Eleanor was born, and her mother passed to her final rest without further sign from the white house that its inhabitants took any interest in their neighbours' joys or sorrows, beyond the housekeeper being sent to inquire after Mr Harcourt ; and, to the surprise of every one, actually asking to see the baby. She said it was a pretty creature, and informing Mrs Evans that her name was Mrs Green, she retired to the privacy of her former life.

It happened, when Eleanor was nearly five years old, that she and her faithful attendant went out one day to take a long walk in search of all the wild flowers which grew in such profusion round her home. Her little feet were strong and active,

and if she got tired, "dear Evy" always carried her as far as she liked. The two had wandered far, and were returning, Eleanor running before, laden with the glorious heather she had pulled from the hill side when she perceived at the garden gate of the white house where Mr Smith lived, that gentleman, looking down the road. When she reached the spot, Eleanor innocently held up for his admiration her purple nosegay, which required both tiny hands to hold together. The peculiar beauty of the child, and the simplicity of the action, might have melted the heart of any cynic, as it did that of Mr Smith, and stooping to kiss the rosy cheek, he said the flowers were very pretty. Emboldened by his manner, Eleanor presented her armful of treasures, and told her new friend "he might have them for himself if he liked, for she would make him a present of them;" and then, peeping through the white bars of the gate, the little lady proceeded to remark, "that there were very pretty flowers in there, too." "Would she like to come in, and look at them?" "Yes, very much," so the white gate was opened, and Mrs Evans was astonished to see her young lady entering, by invitation, where every one else had hitherto been refused admittance. Eleanor walked all round the little piece of garden, and admired with sparkling eyes the pink and white bachelor button daisies with which the beds were bordered. When her survey was complete, she in-

quired "If Mr Smith would like some more flowers like those she had brought?" and receiving a favourable answer said, as she tripped out at the gate in obedience to a summons from Evans, "that she would come again." What can an old gentleman do when a fairy graciously intimates her intention of visiting him, but express himself flattered and obliged? Mr Smith accordingly thanked her, and said he should be very glad to see her if she liked to come.

The child did not forget the permission; but for many days Evans refused her request "to go and see the nice gentleman," from a fear, after what had passed, of seeming intrusive. The first time, however, that she directed their walk that way, Mr Smith was found in the same place, as if looking out for them, and when Eleanor ran forward, the garden-gate was opened with alacrity to receive the sprite. From that day the little girl became a constant visitor; and Mr Smith begged Evans would ask Mr Harcourt's permission for her to come as often as she liked: a request which was at once granted, as the good clergyman rejoiced at anything that seemed to enliven the solitude of his lonely parishioner.

It soon became part of Eleanor's daily life to visit her new friend. When the weather was fine, she was admitted into the green shady lawn at the back of the house, where she often spent the whole afternoon, while Evans and Mrs Green were be-

coming on their side very good friends. At last she invited her grave companion to come out with her and gather wild flowers. "It would," she said, "be so very nice;" and the gray-haired man went forth, holding by the hand his tiny companion; and from that day the three might be met, wandering over the hills, or searching the sunny banks, and coming back laden with primroses and violets. She was a complete personification of glee, that fairy child, and in her presence the worn heart seemed to have grown young again.

Eleanor, however, was deriving good as well as bestowing it. Mr Smith soon discovered her cleverness and intelligence, and from him she learned more than Evans could teach her; her lessons became a regular thing before they took their daily rambles, and Mr Harcourt was suddenly astonished to find the progress she was making under her new instructor. This oddly assorted fellowship continued for four or five years, during which Eleanor's childish mind was insensibly deriving a strength of character which, at a later period, proved of the greatest use to her, while at the same time, she acquired as much knowledge as at her age she was capable of receiving. But the intimacy thus established by the little girl had not led to any farther exchange of civilities between Mr Smith and his neighbours, to whom he continued the same recluse as before; and Eleanor, child as she was, felt the force of the privilege conceded to her, and was

proudly conscious that no one but herself could relate stories which had for their beginning, "Mr Smith and I."

While the little girl had thus found a friend, John had on his side formed an acquaintance at school with the son of a gentleman named Vernon, who possessed some property close to Holmdale. They were of the same age and disposition, and being both only sons, were glad to find themselves such near neighbours in the holidays. John sometimes spent a few days at the Vernons', but Edward seemed particularly to enjoy visits to the vicarage, where he spent so much of his time, that Eleanor soon began to consider him as another brother.

Her tenth birthday was approaching, when Mr Smith suddenly became ill from the effects of a cold which he had caught whilst working in his garden ; and though at the end of a few days Mrs Green, in answer to inquiries made, said that he was better, yet they were still fated not to meet ; for one day she heard to her sorrow, that Mr Smith was gone to London, without saying when he should return. It was, however, rumoured at the end of a week that he was still far from well, and unable to travel at present, which report received confirmation when the coach was seen stopping at the white house, to convey Mrs Green, with sundry bags and boxes, to join her master. As they had no correspondent in the place, no one knew anything of their movements. The woman

left in charge of the house had only been told to keep it aired till the inhabitants came back; there was therefore nothing to do but to wait patiently for that event.

But Eleanor never saw her friend again; and after some weeks of childish longing and impatience, she was beginning to enter into Evans' new schemes for amusing and employing herself, when Mr Harcourt was startled one morning by receiving a letter, conveying intelligence at once surprising and unexpected. The writer stated that he had been for many years in the habit of transacting business for Mr Smith, residing at Holmdale, and a parishioner of Mr Harcourt's; that he begged to inform him that that gentleman had very lately died in London, and that by a will, made a short time before his death, he had left the bulk of his fortune, amounting to thirty thousand pounds, to Miss Eleanor Harcourt, who had been the means of making his last few years happier than those of his preceding life. The letter further stated, that as the will was properly signed and witnessed, there was not the slightest doubt of its validity, and that it would not be contested in any way.

Mr Harcourt was at first bewildered and puzzled by the news; but reflecting that he had nothing to give his children, he could not but feel satisfaction at seeing Eleanor so well provided for. That his daughter should ever be rich, was what the father



had perhaps least dreamt of. The child herself was less able to appreciate her newly acquired fortune than those about her, but was sincerely grieved to hear of her kind friend's death. As to his having left her any money, she asked if it was not "a good thing to be rich? It was very kind of Mr Smith to think of her." But whether she was to have thirty, or thirty thousand pounds, was all the same in her imagination, and she soon forgot in a game at play that she had just become a young lady of fortune. It became necessary, however, that she should have more instruction than had hitherto been afforded her; and from this time she was sent as a day-scholar to the house of a lady who took a few pupils, and lived not far from the vicarage. But in play-hours and holidays, she still took walks with "Evy," in which she was sometimes accompanied by some of her new companions, and in the vacations she romped with the boys with undiminished mirth and eagerness.

They were a merry trio, as they chased each other up and down the lawn, or through the orchards and fields which surrounded Mr Harcourt's house; but with all their joyousness, there was more in John Harcourt and Edward Vernon than appeared at first sight, even in these their school-boy days, and they had already decided on a course, which none who ever entered have found easy, or lightly to be followed. From Edward Vernon's earliest days, he had always said he

meant when a man to be a missionary. The idea was a fixed one in the child's mind, and he eagerly read all the accounts of the subject at all within his comprehension. At school he had made John Harcourt a confidant of his projects, had won him over to the same views; and already the two looked forward to the time when they should be old enough to take orders and go forth, like the apostles, "to teach all nations." To their young imaginations, difficulties vanished at a touch, and great in idea was the good they were to effect in a very short space of time. It is well, perhaps, that it should be so. A distinct view and understanding of all the obstacles in a difficult path, might prevent some from entering it, who, pressing forward in all the freshness of zeal and assurance, often succeed the better from not having had their courage damped by previous apprehensions. The only other and better quality that can remove mountains, is the firm and unshakable faith, which more generally belongs to maturer years—to the experience that can look back to the proved security of a well-grounded hope. From their parents the two boys met with no opposition; it had long been an understood thing, that when the time should arrive for decision, their own wishes were to be the guide. Missionary enterprise and labour was therefore one of their great topics of interest, particularly during the long winter evenings, when books supplied the place of out-of-door amuse-

ments ; and Eleanor, who had never had any idea of being separated from their pursuits, entered eagerly into all their plans.

How deeply rooted the thought was at that time that their life was always to be as hitherto, in close union, a circumstance which took place when John and Edward had grown into youths of seventeen and eighteen plainly shewed.

An autumn holiday had collected the party, and one very important business to be got through that day was the shaking of a large apple-tree, whose fruit was of the kind that ripened early. To the orchard, therefore, the boys had resorted, with the gardener and a ladder, and by the time Eleanor, then a girl of thirteen, had reached the scene of action, accompanied by Evans, the two were buried in the boughs of the wide-spreading tree. Evans, drawing out her work, sat down on the grass, out of reach of the falling shower ; but her young charge, who had come to help, plunged at once into the thick of the storm. The results were very satisfactory ; if she got a few bruises, she gathered abundance of rosy apples, and the basket was being rapidly filled, when the shaking ceased, and she saw, on peeping up into the tree, that the agitators had given up their efforts, and were regaling themselves, as they sat on the branches. The repast seemed good, for presently John hailed Edward, who was on an upper bough, with an inquiry whether “ He thought in the coun-

tries they were going to they should get anything half as good as apples?" Edward hoped so; and Eleanor, chiming in from beneath, said they were not to forget "that she was going too."

"Oh, but Eleanor," shouted John, "I don't think you will be able to come; you have forgotten all the lions and tigers, and you are rather afraid as it is even of Neptune."

"But, John," replied his sister, "I need not go where the wild beasts are; and if they should come, you could shoot them; and if you could'nt, why, Edward could; could'nt you, Edward?"

"Oh yes," answered the individual thus addressed, "I'll shoot them. You see, John, we shall have to take her if she wants to go. I'll ask leave for you, Eleanor, when the time comes, and then if you still wish, why, we will manage it somehow."

Eleanor smiled her thanks, and understood little of the looks that passed between Evans and the gardener who stood by. The conversation was by the former repeated to Mr Harcourt, who felt no anxiety as to the result; his father had been a missionary, his mother a missionary's wife; his son had chosen for himself his grandfather's career, why should his daughter, if Providence so ordered it, be less happy in the same lot? Altogether, he was well content to let things take their own course, without any interference on his part.

This, however, had he been so inclined, was before long rendered impossible by the stroke of

death, which removed him before another year from the scene of his earthly labours. He had some time previously requested a cousin of his own name, a banker in London, and in whose house Eleanor's fortune had been placed, to become the guardian of his children, in the event of their being deprived of their remaining parent. Mr Harcourt had accepted the trust, and the day was now come when it would have to be fulfilled. For John, there remained but little anxiety; he was at Oxford, where he was not only much esteemed, but had gained high honours. His vacations were spent with the Vernons or other friends, sometimes at college, but seldom in London with his guardian, whose wife did not look kindly on her husbands' wards.

The girl, however, could not thus be put aside, and Mr Harcourt himself fetched her from Holmdale, and introduced her to her future home. That change was the turning-point in Eleanor's character. Mrs Harcourt was a thorough woman of the world, devoted to its amusements and gaiety, and like most such, selfish and heartless; she was much annoyed at anything that could interfere with her pursuits, and was by no means disposed to receive her charge favourably.

When, however, she saw how much promise Eleanor gave of beauty, her vexation in some degree relaxed, particularly when she reflected on her very handsome fortune; she determined to

make her fashionable, and give her every advantage in dress and appearance. With this view she kept her for a time with herself. Eleanor's character unfortunately had the seeds in it of qualities, which only wanted fostering to attain a most pernicious growth. In the purer atmosphere of her country home they had not been perceived, because nothing had called them into action; here they threatened, under present influences, to choke all the good seed which had ever been sown. Under Mrs Harcourt's tuition, she soon became aware of the consequence derived from having a fortune, by the flattering attention that surrounded her; she heard, moreover, that she would be a beauty, and before long gave herself so many airs, and became so unmanageable, that Mrs Harcourt informed her husband, that Eleanor must be sent to school. It was at this time she had been placed under the care of Mrs Haye, where Adela had already been some weeks. It was another chance for her better self to regain the ascendancy, and Mrs Haye might have succeeded in restoring the balance of the disordered mind, and hushing the turbulent spirit, had it not been for the injurious effects of each returning vacation; her endeavours were always undone by the evil imbibed in the holidays, and she soon saw with regret that the opposing current swept away any good she had hoped might be in progress. Eleanor grew in health, in beauty, in all that was attractive to the eye, but equally

in a haughtiness of self-will and spirit, which defied all endeavours to bring it to a humbler mind; she in fact saw no reason for adopting the views laid before her, having already signally made her way, and become sensible of the vantage grounds on which she stood. It signified little, as she had said, what Mrs Hays might think, as she was one of those quiet-going people who had never had any chance of being either an heiress or a beauty.

In the vacation, which was the last before she left school, she had spent a week at the house of an old friend of her father, in company with her brother and Edward Vernon. The latter met her with all the warmth of privileged acquaintance, but found himself decidedly repulsed. Before the visit was over, he contrived to lead conversation to the subject of old days, and among other things to the promise made at her request in the orchard. The time was coming when their visions were to become realities; was she prepared to face the danger under the protection of himself and her brother? A looker-on might have seen that Edward Vernon was not indifferent to the answer; but "a change had come over the spirit of her dream," since those days. She had not had the experience of years to teach her the inestimable worth of a true heart, and was not without an indefinite idea, that some prince in matrimonial difficulties might ask her to share his fate. She did not misunderstand

the question, but gave no sign of attaching any meaning to it, and by her reply, made it clear to Edward Vernon, that she had no idea of banishing herself, her thirty thousand pounds, and her beauty, to the land of heathens, of lions, and of tigers. At the end of a week they parted, and met not again, till one at least had learnt the value of sincerity.

It has been necessary for us to go back thus far in our history, to make it clear and intelligible to the reader; but having once more arrived at our starting-point, we shall not again make such long digressions.





## CHAPTER IV.

### A Golden Balance.

"Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."—DANIEL v. 27.

Earth walketh on the earth, glistening with gold ;  
Earth goeth to the earth, sooner than it wold ;  
Earth buildeth on the earth palaces and towers ;  
Earth sayeth to the earth, All shall be ours.

WHEN Mrs Harcourt received intelligence that Eleanor was about to return for the vacation which was to bring her as a resident under her roof, she informed Mrs Haye, in a letter written to that lady, that as it would not suit with her numerous engagements to send for the purpose of meeting Miss Harcourt, she should be obliged if an arrangement could be made by which the person in whose charge she travelled might accompany the young lady to her guardian's house. Inconvenient as was the unreasonable request, it was judged well to comply with it; and therefore the English governess, in whose care the pupils had been placed, after having seen the others safe with their friends, had to defer her

own gratification (for she too had a home to go to), until she had conducted Eleanor to her future abode.

At the door of a handsome house, at the west end of London, the two parted, and Eleanor, with her usually majestic step, followed the tall footman, stately as herself, into the spacious drawing-room, where a neglected-looking fire shewed that the apartment had been long deserted by the mistress of the house. The servant having restored some animation, and succeeded in raising a blaze, departed, leaving the young lady alone. Before long, however, a lady's maid appeared. "She hoped Miss Harcourt was well; Mrs Harcourt, who was dressing to go out to dinner, would be glad to see her up stairs;" and Eleanor accordingly followed her guide to another floor, and in a few minutes stood in the presence of her guardian's wife.

"Oh Eleanor, there you are, my dear; very tired? I would kiss you, only it tumbles one so much when one is dressed. Minette, you have given me the wrong bracelet. If you had but arrived sooner, Eleanor, you could have gone with me to-night,—my fan, Minette,—and I would have introduced you to some charming people. However, that will do another day, and I daresay you have nothing fit to wear, if you had been here earlier, so it is just as well. I must be going now, my dear; how blooming you look! Make yourself quite at home; Minette will attend upon you, and

they will let you have either dinner or tea, whichever you wish;" and, with a nod and a smile, Mrs Harcourt swept from the room, in all the splendour of her velvet dress.

Eleanor was too proud to betray anything of her feeling at her reception, whatever it might be. She requested Minette would conduct her to her room, and acquaint the housekeeper that, having dined, she would like to have tea sent up into the drawing-room. On descending thither, she found it was no longer solitary, as her little cousin Juliana had come down to see her. We have not mentioned her before. She was an only child, and now between six and seven years old, with nothing particularly attractive about her; perhaps as agreeable as a child could be, brought up by such a parent. Eleanor had never been very fond of her, but to night Juliana was the only person who had said, and really seemed to mean it, that she cared to see the new comer, who was now sincerely glad of her company. The rest of the establishment were as dignified and freezing as the marble goddess who stood on her pedestal at the end of the room. Before Eleanor's meal was concluded, the nurse came to summon Juliana to bed; and the child having departed, and the tea things been removed, she was left to solitude, and such meditation as she might find most pleasant. There was room for thought: leaning back in her easy chair, the beauty gazed at the fire which was her only

companion, and fell into what has been called a brown study.

This was her welcome; she could not add, "home;" no, on that point she did not deceive herself; it was not home, and her thoughts travelled back to happier times which she had valued too little. The hills that her infancy had looked on were before her, with the clothing of their purple heather; the laburnums of Holmdale were streaming in their luxuriant gold; she was wandering again with the companion of her childhood, she was chasing the boys round the orchard, she was gathering rosy apples under a tree, she was learning the mysteries of hemming from dear Evy, she was sitting by the side of one who called her my daughter. Were they dreams she had dreamt? Or dissolving views that were but deceptions? Or had she, indeed, been once that little child? The solitary room was peopled, she was no longer alone, and a tear, proof of a heart not quite hardened, found its way down her cheek.

And then followed other scenes, and she saw a young girl who had listened eagerly to those who spoke of wealth and beauty; she beheld her growing each year in proud defiance of wise and gentle counsel. The times of old had vanished, other voices and other tones were heard; she recognised even in the bending figure in Mrs Haye's school-room, the same absorbing wish to be brilliant, admired, and great; and a smile passed over her

countenance. She had found herself once more, she needed not a name for her picture; for this was no dream, and she knew it well to be Eleanor Harcourt.

She arose slowly, and procuring a light, retired to her own room, where, having dismissed her maid, she sought for the sleep which was long in coming. Mrs Harcourt's carriage had stood at the door, and her footsteps sounded on the stairs before the traveller closed her eyes. She was not one to speak of the visions which surrounded her slumbers. Were they of the past, the present, or the future? We cannot tell. With the morning light things wore a brighter aspect, and Eleanor, with an unclouded brow, sought the dining-room at the usual hour for breakfast.

Her guardian, a kindly-disposed man, was already there, and his greeting was far warmer than his wife's had been. He told Eleanor he was glad to see her, and hoped she would make herself happy in his house; he was himself so much engaged, that they would not often meet, save as now, in the morning, and again at dinner; but he was sure Mrs Harcourt would do all in her power to prevent her life being dull, adding that the handsome allowance she was to receive, would, he trusted, satisfy all reasonable wishes, so that she need have no anxiety on that point. Eleanor looked, and expressed her thanks.

When Mrs Harcourt appeared, she too was kind

and cordial ; perhaps she wished to atone in some measure for the solitude of the past evening. She hoped Eleanor had made herself very comfortable, and was glad to see she had lost none of her roses ; after breakfast they must have a long talk together, and in the afternoon there would be abundance of shopping to do ; and thence she proceeded to speak of the charming people she had met the evening before, till Eleanor's eyes sparkled with the interest she felt. Could it be otherwise, when she was on the point of making such acquaintances, and had a fair prospect of passing much of her life among those whom she now heard described in such favourable colours, the delightful friends with whom Mrs Harcourt's circle seemed to abound ? Soon after breakfast the two proceeded to Eleanor's apartment, to decide what would be required to make her wardrobe all that could be wished, before she was formally presented to those who were anxious to see her. Minette was called into counsel, and deep and long was the important deliberation. When she had given her advice, and received the instruction for her department, Mrs Harcourt had still many topics to discuss with her charge. A maid was to be got solely to attend on her ; it was impossible Minette could undertake the duties which would be required for two ladies ; and had proposed a sister of her own for the situation if Miss Harcourt liked. She had no objection, and Pauline, so the new Abigail was called,

was to receive notice she could come without delay. This point settled, Mrs Harcourt proceeded to unfold a scheme which had been for some time forming in her mind.

If Eleanor had given way to a little meditation, on her first evening of returning, she was not the only one to whom that event had caused some deep reflection. Her future chaperone was not a lady who liked to have any disturbing current among her usual pleasures ; she had seen enough to anticipate some little trouble in ruling the haughty spirit of her husband's ward, and was not without suspicion, that in her charge she should find more than her match in cleverness, and quite her equal in pride. In the case of a plain girl without a fortune, she would certainly have declined the task altogether. As it was, however, she knew what she was about to do, and the additional importance she would derive from being the chaperone of a handsome heiress. Here, too, would be a perpetual excuse for constantly attending the amusements of which she was so fond ; they would in fact become quite a pleasant duty, and there was no danger that Eleanor would hang on her hands till she was weary of her, or until she stood in Juliana's way ; there was not the slightest doubt that, with her advantages, she would before long make a brilliant match. But with all this there was the constant probability, that the name being the same, Eleanor would by most people who did not know much of

their history be taken for her daughter, and she by no means wished to appear in public as the mother of a grown-up girl.

In the course of her reflections, a bright thought occurred: those who acquired fortunes in the way that Eleanor's had come to her, frequently took the name of the person by whom the money had been left. Why should not this be done now? It would be a compliment to Mr Smith, and relieve her from the dilemma she dreaded. A letter patent would make all straight; it seemed to her an undeniable plan, and this was the scheme which she now unfolded in the sanctuary of her morning room. She was not in the least prepared for the decided resistance with which it was met. Eleanor had not the slightest wish to exchange the name of Harcourt, and certainly not for that of Smith. To be confounded with the innumerable Smiths was not to be tolerated. No one could be pleased by such a step, the old gentleman least of all. No; she would keep her own name, which her father had borne before her, and appear to the world as his child, and not as an indefinite Miss Smith. Mrs Harcourt saw by the flashing eye that the spirit was roused, which, as we have said, she feared, and that it would not be prudent to provoke the contest. She therefore merely said, it was of no consequence, she had only imagined Eleanor might have liked to mark her gratitude to her old benefactor, and the young lady replied in



the same tone, that she was much obliged to her, but such a thing was not for a moment to be thought of.

The afternoon was occupied in the business Mrs Harcourt had planned, of making purchases. We are not going to fill our pages with the respective merits of silks and laces, and need only remark, that the result was all that could be wished ; and when Eleanor, dressed in the most exquisite taste, but richer still in her youthful bloom, made her first appearance in public, Mrs Harcourt might have been well satisfied to call such a one by the name of daughter. And thus the two went forth together into the gay and fashionable world ; they were agreed in liking it, and also in another important point ; Eleanor was not to throw herself away, she was to make what is called "a good match." But though thus far of accord, there was in the young girl a deeper and a truer spirit than Mrs Harcourt had ever imagined or could ever possess. For the present, however, it was buried deep in the frivolities of the passing hour.

It is not our intention to follow them through the round of gaiety in which they were busily engaged ; it is enough to say, that what they sought, they found. Eleanor was flattered, admired, and caressed by all ; her success was complete ; there was incense enough even to satisfy her. If at times she found, as others have done before her, that there mingled with her joy much weariness

and vexation of spirit, she held no parley with the mood. If there came moments when former resolutions were remembered with a secret consciousness that they were not being fulfilled, she found many plausible reasons for singing her monitor to rest. She was not her own mistress, she did what others wished her; she had not placed herself where she was; it was useless to attempt a little good. It had always been her dream to command applause, for the greatness of action which should have its own peculiar platform. She was sure she could walk to the stake, if need be, where there should be crowds to see her die; but at present, till the time was come, she lived a life of pleasurable ease. She knew not, because she had not sought to know, that the ranks of "the noble army of martyrs" had been filled from among those whose care it had been to "die daily," nor suspected that they who neglected the one, might find in themselves, when put to the test, but little of the spirit of the other.

Nor was it, as she imagined, the fault of circumstances: the excuse has well been called "the devil's masterpiece," for deluding those who will listen to such reasoning. Wherever God has placed His creatures, there, and nowhere else in higher or lower sphere, He looks for their service; for other work He will not want his appointed labourers, to whom He will look for that committed to their charge. Our Lord himself warned the rich of

their peculiar dangers and temptations, but none need withdraw from their natural positions to enable them to serve, if they will, with a true heart and a single aim. Among the countless hosts of heaven, "one star differeth from another star in glory," yet all shew alike their Maker's praise. On earth are the "hills watered from above," whence flow streams of rejoicing for the valleys and the plains. There are high places in life, which as they are of divine appointment, so it is ever to the advantage of all that they be retained. There are lights that may not be hid under a bushel, and the bright and steady beacon, on the lofty headland, guides to a right course many who are struggling in danger, darkness, and distress. In all times there have been noble examples to prove that the wealthy and the great may also be pre-eminently the good.

But in a constant whirl of dissipation, there was no time for such reflections. When Eleanor returned at night from her revels, with a spirit excited by the scenes she had just left, and a body fatigued with her very pleasures, she was in no state to commune with a better mind. The morning saw her rise at a late hour only to renew the intoxicating draught. Could that be good which kept the being from the presence chamber of the Creator? which led from the path abounding in temptations to a prayerless couch? It is a good test whereby to prove the safety of the things in

which we allow ourselves ; what is harmless to one may be poison to the other. Let each judge, but judge honestly. It was well for Eleanor that she was not then required to give an account of her entrusted talents. The prayer of Agur was a good one, "Give me neither poverty nor riches," for perhaps the lot which has been cast between the two has the fewest dangers to contend with.

The greater part of life is made up of such small things, that to dwell on the everyday minutiae which compose the whole is ever tedious and wearisome. As an artist endeavours to convey his idea in the fewest touches, so do we desire by the chief events of the history which we are relating, to shew what manner of spirit was in those of whom we speak.



## CHAPTER V.

### Old Friends Depart and some Remain.

" My heart goes with thee, dauntless man,  
    Freely as thou dost hie,  
To sojourn with some barbarous clan ;  
    For them to live and die.

" Thou climbs't the vessel's lofty side ;  
    Numbers are gathering there—  
The youthful warrior in his pride,  
    The merchant in his care ;

" Hearts that for knowledge track the seas,  
    Spirits that lightly rove,  
Glad as the billows and the breeze,  
    And thou, the child of love.

—HAWITT.

WHEN Eleanor had been between two and three years an inmate of Mrs Harcourt's family, the time arrived at which her brother and Edward Vernon were to leave England, to commence the work for which they had been so long destined. No one acquainted with the two could doubt their fitness for the task they were undertaking. Of high character, and blameless life, combined, in John Harcourt's case

at least, with commanding talents, those who had the missionary cause at heart rejoiced that there had been found two such labourers to send into the fields which were ripening for the harvest. The mental superiority which distinguished his friend, was in Edward Vernon amply compensated for by his sound judgment and unshaken perseverance. The same warmth of zeal animated both alike; and though Edward would laughingly call himself a slow coach compared with John, it would have been hard to say which of the two was likely to prove the most useful.

In John Harcourt was the same brightness of character which distinguished his sister, whom he also resembled in personal appearance. The dark hair, keen eye, and clear complexion were the children's inheritance from their mother. But John, like his friend, had already been subject to disappointment, which had slightly told upon his spirits, and added to the feelings excited by the approaching step of leaving his native country. He had, about two years before, been brought into communication on matters of business with Mr Edgerton, who had perceived the worth of his character, and had taken him home and introduced him to his wife and daughter, whom John already knew by name, as an old companion of his sister. The schoolfellows had heard but little of each other; they had once met, but their paths

were so evidently different, that after a time the intercourse between them had entirely ceased.

The young clergyman became a frequent and welcome guest at the barrister's house. No one could see Adela at home without admiring her, and both soon perceived the devotion which formed so large a part of the character of each. John, before long, thought that he had found one who would be his fellow-helper in the cause he had in hand ; but when he took an opportunity of speaking on the subject, Adela, while acknowledging her interest in the work, told him gently and quietly she could never be more to him than a sincere wellwisher, and hoped he would always consider her as such. But her mother's health failed with each succeeding year ; she required all the care she had hitherto bestowed on others, and Adela's work very clearly lay at home, by her side. She was too evidently right to make it possible to press her any more, and John was too high-minded to lead her to a betrayal of feeling which she had not expressed, and which, perhaps, might not exist. He respected her decision, and, without withdrawing from their society altogether, took care to place her at her ease, while only admiring her the more for what had passed.

The two friends were not going to the same scene of labour, nor, at first, to untried or single posts. At each of the stations to which they were appointed, there was a married missionary of some

standing, so that while the vigour of the younger would give impulse to the work, it would have the benefit of experience, gained at no little labour and self-sacrifice. Edward Vernon had already left England some weeks before his friend had received his final instructions, or notice that the vessel in which he was going would shortly leave for her destination. His preparations were all made, his many rather painful leave-takings accomplished, and all that remained was to bid farewell to his sister, the only connecting link of the old times at the vicarage of Holmdale.

John dined that evening at his guardian's, who had always (though his trust had lasted so short a time) taken a real interest in the young man's welfare. It was with decided pleasure he gathered from the conversation that Mrs Harcourt was going, at a later hour, to an evening party. He had not imagined it possible that, on this his last evening before his final departure, Eleanor intended to absent herself; surely she would give up one evening to an only brother, whom she might never see again. When, however, they returned to the drawing-room, he found, to his surprise, that she was going to accompany Mrs Harcourt, and taking advantage of that lady's absence to improve her appearance, he frankly told her he had hoped she would have liked one quiet evening, and asked her still to remain, as he had many things he wished to say to her.

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"I really do not see, John," returned Eleanor, "what would be the good of my remaining; I should only be perfectly miserable, and make you the same; because, of course, it is very distressing to me that you persist in leaving England in this way. I can never expect to see you again, and always fancy I shall hear of your being eaten up by cannibals, or tigers at the very least. Why, when I think about it, it makes me ready to cry."

"I see, Eleanor, you have not yet quite got over your fear of the wild beasts, and have not much faith in the good service my gun may afford me."

"It might be of use, of course, as far as they are concerned; and perhaps you may live, as others have done, very safely for many years. But what vexes me is, that you should throw yourself away in this manner. It quite provokes me when I think of it."

"I cannot think, dear Eleanor, it is throwing one's self away when there is work to do, in which one hopes at least to help; the only thing is to be sure the work itself is good, and of this I have no doubt."

"Of course not, no one has; every one knows that it is a very right thing to try and teach those sort of people, only I do not see why you should go; there are plenty of men, very good men I dare say too, who have no sort of prospects in this country, and would do to send; but with your talents, and the honours you have gained at col-

lege, you know you might get anything you pleased at home."

"It might be so, Eleanor, perhaps I should not starve if I remained; but if the only motive for going were the having no prospects here, I fear we should find few devoted workmen on the Lord's side. There needs something more than self-interest to lead a man to risk his life, and spend his best energies in scenes like those of which you seem to have so vivid an idea; such missionaries as you propose would seldom die at their post, exhorting those who come after to stand firm, and do the like; no, my sister, we need more than the man, we need the spirit of that love which many waters cannot quench. We have one such, at least, whom you know, in our friend Edward Vernon."

"Yes," exclaimed Eleanor impatiently, "'our friend Edward' is, I know, perfection in your eyes, and you would have every one of your opinion."

"He is not perfect, no man is; but he is true-hearted; a merit upon which you once set a higher value than you appear to do now."

"I am sure, John, I respect Edward very much; but you could not expect, when our positions became so altered, that I should remember any childish nonsense which took place when I was too young to understand anything of the world. I shall be able to do a great deal more good, no doubt, than if I had become simply Mrs Vernon;

really, John, you might have wished something better for me."

"You are mistaken, Eleanor, in thinking I ever wished you anything but well; still more in imagining I regretted your decision; Edward Vernon is far too good for any one who does not know and appreciate his value."

"Too good!" exclaimed his sister with undisguised astonishment; "too good! I only hope he may get some one better; though my fortune might have satisfied the son of a poor country gentleman, whose patrimony, to say the least, is very slender."

There was more sternness than usual in her brother's countenance, but none in his voice, as he replied, "I was not speaking of pounds, shillings, and pence, but of persons; and as for Edward's pedigree, though he is only the son of a poor country gentleman, yet he has been adopted by One far greater, and has a finer inheritance in store than many who look down upon him."

"Indeed! I never heard of it. When was this? lately, I suppose?"

"It was before you ever knew him," answered John; "in the days when you played together he was a 'King's son,' and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." She understood him now. Hoping her better feelings were touched, as she remained silent, he continued, "Eleanor, we shall soon part, and who can tell when we may meet again. Do not be angry at my saying one word

on a subject that makes me anxious: the world talks much of the attentions shewn you by Mr Anstruther."

"And if they do," said she, her proud manner returning, "you cannot know Mr Anstruther as well as I do; what does report say?"

"It says he has paid you attentions which cannot be mistaken, and which have not been unfavourably received; that he is not rich, but will have a title to offer instead of a fortune, and that he appears likely to make the bargain he desires."

"And what if he do? His rank, I suppose, need not prevent his making a good husband."

"It need not; have you considered what the chances are that such will be the case?"

"I must say, John, it is very uncharitable of you to judge a man by hearsay, most uncharitable; besides, it would be useless to discuss the point with you. We should differ in our ideas of a good husband; you would like a tame spirit, I want position and rank. Trust me, I shall do very well for myself. And then remember the many opportunities I shall have for doing good. The first thing, I assure you, I intend to pay a handsome yearly subscription to the missionary society. I do not think it will do you any harm to be Lady Culmore's brother."

"I fear," was the reply, "I am less sensible of my bright prospects than I ought to be. The Missionary Society will be much obliged to you for

your money ; it will help on a great work, but present will not do you much good."

"Do me much good ! No, of course not ; I give money away for the good of others general but you have all sorts of odd ideas now. Where comes Mrs Harcourt all ready ; you do go to-morrow before the evening ?"

"No ; I must leave this in time for the mail

"Oh, very well ; then I shall see you again the morning. Good night," added the laughing girl ; "we shall meet again to-morrow."

But it was not to be so. When at a late hour Eleanor opened her weary eyes, and languidly began the business of her toilette, which, on such occasions, was not completed much before lunch-time, the maid presented a note to her mistress from whose hand it dropped, after having been read. It was from John, to say that during the absence the preceding evening, he had received notice that the vessel would sail a few hours earlier than the time first named, and only wait for her passengers to join her. He had, in consequence, been obliged to leave that morning early, a few hours only after they returned from the ball ; and as he should not see Eleanor again he had written his farewell, which was not to be given till she awoke, that the rest she needed might be undisturbed. He wished her, in conclusion, every happiness, with the assurance he should always remain her affectionate though absent brother.

He was gone. That evening saw John Harcourt quit his native country ; and, perhaps, among all the conflicting feelings with which he watched the fading outline of the coast, none weighed more heavily than the remembrance of the preceding evening. That his bright and beautiful sister should be absent from him in body was a circumstance which might not have surprised him, but such a perfect separation of spirit was what he had never looked for ; a change which he would at one time have deemed impossible. He knew that a missionary's life will ever be one of disappointment in many things ; was this the beginning of his training ? Eleanor herself was grieved that their last meeting was what it had been ; but present things soon regained their ascendancy ; and when she appeared that evening in public, no shadow seemed resting upon her, only a gentler gravity than usual, which was rather becoming than otherwise.

John had not been misinformed with regard to Mr Anstruther. It was now some months since that gentleman had enlisted himself as an admirer of Miss Harcourt. He had pleasing manners, with, moreover, a title in prospect, and was consequently received with more favour than former suitors. The world were not mistaken in supposing matters were progressing favourably, and it was rumoured that the gentleman was in fact accepted. They were not wrong in thinking that the parties had arrived at an amicable understanding, though, as

yet, Mr Harcourt's sanction had not been formally sought; and there was some little delay, which wise heads, busied about other people's affairs, could not account for; indeed, it was causing Eleanor herself surprise, as they had not seen Mr Anstruther of late as often as usual.

"Dear Mrs Harcourt," said the young lady one day, as they were just going out, "we must really go to Madame Victoire's and order my dress for the ball; you know I have worn my pink tulle twice, and have been seen in every other that I have, so that I positively want something new."

The coachman therefore received orders accordingly, and on the way Mrs Harcourt took occasion to settle her carriage bag. "It is so full," said she, "I put a number of letters that came into it; they look like circulars. I wonder why people will keep sending them." It was very singular certainly, for nothing was ever got by doing so, it must have been a habit. "Just see, my dear, what they all are." Eleanor opened and read the heading of the first; an hospital, which had for years done much, was crippled for want of means to carry on its work in behalf of suffering and misery. She put it aside and proceeded to the next: the rector of the parish wished to enlarge his schools and hoped his wealthy parishioners would support him; a third petitioned for funds to assist in building a church for the lower orders in an overcrowded and poor district; a fourth was from a friend of Mrs

Harcourt; would she contribute towards raising a small sum, which would enable a poor widow to open a little shop, and support a family of young children? "Dear me," said the lady, "how much distress! But I shall not be able to send them anything. Mr Harcourt has already given his guinea as usual for the schools. Put them up, my dear, perhaps I may be able to give Mrs Thomson half-a-crown for her good woman; I will certainly think about it."

"I wish," said Eleanor, "I had some ready money; but my allowance this quarter is all gone, and I do not like to ask for more. Dress," she continued, "in London is so very expensive."

"Yes, my dear," rejoined Mrs Harcourt, "and always will be while we have so much smoke. Now here we are, so if you mean to have your dress you must put those away and get out."

Madame Victoire had, as usual, all that was elegant and fashionable. There could not be two opinions as to the good taste of Eleanor's choice, which, however, fell on very expensive articles. The dress was promised in a few days, and the ladies departed to resume their drive.

On the following Sunday they went to the church, which was not far from their house. The clergyman, at the accustomed hour, read the gospel for the day,—

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him



of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead," Luke x. 30. Who does not know the Scripture narrative? Eleanor listened in dreamy attention till the concluding words, "Go thou and do likewise," fell upon her ear, and dwelt upon her mind during the remainder of the service. Once more the good chord was touched, and when, gathering her shawl about her, she followed Mrs Harcourt out of church, Eleanor was sure, that when she met her neighbour in the circumstances described, there would be no need to remind her of the injunction which had been added.



## CHAPTER VI.

### *Fortune's Wheel Goes Round.*

"One word about domestic servants. I do protest against the cry made, that the class of good female domestics has departed.

"When I remember what I have seen, in many a year's observation, 'hirelings' do, of works of true affection and long endurance for their employers, of almost every rank, I will not allow that the race of good servants is gone; for I see the same thing now, the same affectionate care of children, nursing of the sick, &c., and this by those who know more, and have read more, than half our grandparents ever read or knew."—S. G. O., *Times*, Nov. 26. 1859.

NO one was more interested than Mrs Harcourt in the prospect which presented itself of her ward making a match, pronounced by the world to be all that could be desired for a young lady in Eleanor's position. The delay which has been mentioned had already caused her considerable annoyance, which feeling was much increased, and indeed changed to anger, on finding shortly after that Eleanor had suddenly completely altered in manner towards Mr Anstruther, and received his attention with such marked indifference, that he soon entirely relinquished his visits. Mrs Har-

court did not fail to remonstrate with her young charge on the subject, and received a haughty and angry explanation, given with the sparkling eyes and volcanic flash of countenance which Eleanor so peculiarly possessed. The fact was, that her chaperone, in her anxiety to promote the union she had at heart, had intentionally exaggerated the fortune possessed by her husband's ward. A friend of Mr Anstruther's, better informed than himself, had acquainted him with the real state of the case ; and the information had led to an observation that this made a great difference. Eleanor had accidentally become aware of what had passed, and her pride and dignity were sorely wounded at finding her fortune had been her principal attraction. Stung with mortification, and irritated by the deception with which her name had been associated, she took decided measures to let Mr Anstruther see clearly that she no longer desired his interested attentions, and that he was at full liberty to transfer them elsewhere. Mrs Harcourt could not but feel that her double dealing had gone far to frustrate the accomplishment of her favourite plan ; but she did not explain what had passed to her husband, who never clearly understood why no more was heard of the coronet which he had been told awaited the fair brow of his ward. He, however, asked no questions, and left the matter to those he considered most interested. A truce was apparently established be-

tween the ladies, but the younger one could not forget the offence which herself-respect had suffered, and though outwardly the life they led was unchanged, there was no longer any unity of purpose between them. Eleanor would gladly have sought another home, and Mrs Harcourt, who would not have regretted getting rid of her charge, informed her husband of his ward's inclination to be dissatisfied with her present life. That gentleman, however, lent no favourable ear to the subject; he spoke to Eleanor kindly, representing that his house was the most proper residence for her, till she should have one of her own. To his wife, he presented a different view of the case; though thirty thousand pounds were nothing to a mercantile house, yet speculations in which he was engaged would render it inconvenient for him to make over Miss Harcourt's fortune, which, now that she was of age, she might, if so inclined, request him to do. Mrs Harcourt must, he said, contrive to make their house pleasant to her, until she married, by which time, no doubt, the transactions he had in hand would be terminated, and her portion would be handed over as soon as required.

If Mrs Harcourt had not been so very much busied in other matters, she might have perceived that her husband had of late appeared more than usually restless and anxious; but she had always made it a rule never to trouble herself about affairs

of business. That money should be forthcoming for her wishes was all she cared for, and as it had never failed, she did not watch Mr Harcourt's countenance to see if it was at all graver than circumstances appeared to warrant. But there were keener eyes than hers which had for many months marked the expression of the banker's face, and fancied they found there traces of thought and anxiety weighing upon him. His health, too, had for some time past not been so good as usual; but Mrs Harcourt took no note of the small cloud gathering in her sky. Her great and immediate trouble was the being obliged to make matters go on smoothly with her charge; and it was doubly vexatious to be aware there was no likelihood of her being relieved of this duty at present, as Eleanor had made it apparent that she was neither to be lightly wooed or won. They passed another two years in their customary round of gaiety, and the close of the London season found the votaries of fashion still chained by their many fetters to the stifling heat and dust of town, though the beautiful months of summer were already come. Mrs Harcourt said frequently she should be glad of a change. It was nearer at hand than she supposed.

Eleanor had been for some days aware of an unusual languor, which she found it impossible to shake off; and one particular evening, when they were to go to a concert, she had such a weight like lead at the top of her head, and was altogether

feeling so unwell, that she said she believed she should be obliged to stay at home. Mrs Harcourt, however, thought the excitement might do her good, and she dragged herself wearily up stairs to dress for the occasion. How the business was accomplished, she never could tell; but she remembered that dressing all her life, and the concert that followed. The sound, instead of conveying music to her ear, seemed as if hundred-mouthed instruments were uttering the most hideous discords; the voices appeared double-tongued in the loudness with which they reached her brain, and it was with difficulty she remained to the end. Pauline had left a few weeks previously, and her successor had not yet arrived; it was Minette, therefore, who awaited her at her room door, and was alarmed at the ashy whiteness of her countenance, and to see her faint as soon as she could reach the nearest chair. She was, however, not long in reviving, and to the attendant's anxious remarks, desired that Mrs Harcourt might not be called, as it was probably only a warm day and an overcrowded room which had knocked her up. Minette, acting on this opinion, helped her to get to rest as quickly as possible; when her head was on the pillow, she said it was much more comfortable, and was certain of being better in the morning, and the maid left her in the belief she would soon fall asleep.

When Minette returned, at an earlier hour than

usual, she was startled to find that, far from being better, it was evident Eleanor was exceedingly ill ; she had not slept all night, her head ached violently, and her hands were burning, but she begged she might be left alone and not disturbed. Minette, instead of complying with her request, proceeded to call the housekeeper, who at once resolved, on her own responsibility, to send for the physician who always attended the family.

Mrs Harcourt, having taken her usual rest, rang her bell soon after eleven o'clock, that the servant might bring her the coffee, as was the custom when she had been out late and did not come down to breakfast ; a habit to which Mr Harcourt had been so broken in, that he thought nothing of a solitary meal. The lady was surprised at the apparition, not of Minette with the tray, but of the staid person of her respectable housekeeper, who proceeded briefly to inform her mistress of what had passed before they liked to wake her ; adding, that Dr Selby, who had just left the house, said Miss Harcourt had got the scarlet fever, which she seemed likely to have very severely ; and having given immediate directions, had told her he should call again later in the day.

Nothing could have been a greater shock to the listener ; it was like a sudden plunge into a cold bath. The scarlet fever, in her house too ! Why they might all catch it, and what was more, they might all die of it. Her imagination had already

reached the worst: she begged Mrs Timms would stand a little farther off. The good woman did as requested, and with some little indignation in her voice at the principal sufferer having been forgotten, remarked that she was waiting for her mistress' directions. Mrs Harcourt had remembered that, with some complaints, there was no danger of infection for the first few days; it might be so with scarlet fever. Could not Miss Harcourt be removed before she got worse, to a comfortable place of course, but out of the house; would "Timms see about it?" "No;" Mrs Timms would be no party to any such measures; she was sure, from Dr Selby's manner, he already thought her in danger. They "must nurse her where she was, and take their chance like other people." "If that is the case, my good Timms, I leave it all to you, I really feel I should not be of the slightest use; you will be sure, I know, to see that everything is comfortable; you can tell Minette every day (you must not go near her) exactly how Miss Harcourt is, as of course I shall be exceedingly anxious to hear. It will not be necessary for me to see Dr Selby, as you will always be at hand, and there might be danger of infection when he has just left his patient; so, Mrs Timms, I trust entirely to you; and as you go up, desire that Juliana is not allowed to go to that floor on any account."

This being about the most reasonable remark



her mistress had made, Mrs Timms at once executed the order; but she muttered a good deal, as she went about her work, on the subject of "selfish people" (she did not mention any one particularly) "who had no feeling."

Dr Selby had sent a nurse, but they still needed more help. Minette would have given it, had not her mistress required her attendance; and Mrs Timms was pondering to whom she could apply, when the little under-housemaid volunteered for the service, saying she was not afraid, and would do anything for Miss Harcourt; and though she had not much experience, yet, if the others would direct her, she could do what they wished. Sarah brought at least good will to her task. Her devotion to Eleanor had arisen from that young lady having once kindly inquired after her mother, who was ill. It was not very often Miss Harcourt troubled herself about the servants' interests, and on the young maid it had caused such an impression, that Eleanor's act of kindness was now reaping for her a fourfold reward. But the object of her service was unconscious of this, or indeed of anything else. Before Dr Selby's second visit, she was delirious, and the physician looked grave, telling Mrs Timms it was fortunate her patient was young, and had a good constitution. He smiled when informed that Mrs Harcourt would prefer not seeing him, but merely remarked that fright was likely to give her the infection as soon as anything.

Mr Harcourt was sincerely concerned, on his return home in the evening, to hear how matters stood, and was proceeding directly to the door of the sick room, to get information on the spot, when his wife expressed her extreme astonishment, and begged, if he did not care for the risk himself, he would at least consider her. Her life was indeed now as wretched as could be. She had very properly sent Juliana and her attendant away, and as her friends were afraid to do more than call at the door, she led but a lonely existence, and would gladly have gone to the sea-side to her child; but her husband could not leave town, and, moreover, would not have done so, as, he told her, their absence would be highly improper when Miss Harcourt was in actual danger of losing her life. It certainly looked better for her to stay, though otherwise it made no difference. The only consolation left was taking a drive, where she could at least see her acquaintances, and show the world she was not ill, or likely to be so.

If her days were weary, what were they to the watchers in the darkened room, who each hour looked to see the thread of that young life snap beneath the burning influence of the fatal fever, which ran its undiminished course till hope almost died in the hearts of those who stood round Eleanor's bed? Had the command, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground," gone forth? Was "the accepted time, the day of salvation" past,

for the one who had so lately been full of the pride of strength and beauty? Her nurses watched and waited, till they loved her as a child, and not one but was ready to cry for joy when a slight improvement took place, then a favourable crisis, and the conviction was given that youth would triumph, and that she would be spared. It is true she required the care of an infant from her excessive weakness, but that was little to them then. They could wait with patience to hear the sound of her voice, when they knew that if their nursing was blessed, time alone was wanting. Their care was rewarded, and great was the exultation when they got her into an easy chair, and heard her thank them for all they had done. She was too full of gratitude and of thankfulness even to feel much resentment at hearing of Mrs Harcourt's neglect, and was far more inclined to pity her weakness, of which she was too fully aware to be astonished at any new proofs of it.

One change had come; they were all about to experience another.

Eleanor was progressing favourably, though as yet unable to leave her room, when Mrs Harcourt, on descending one morning to breakfast, was struck with the evident disturbance, which she could not fail to notice in her husband's manner. A pile of letters, a few of which had been opened, lay before him, and she concluded he might have received some unpleasant news; but not being accustomed to

take any notice of such things, she merely inquired if he were ready for breakfast. He answered in the affirmative, and took his seat, but had hardly set down the cup of tea she had given him, when the knife he was holding fell from his hand, and he leant back with a groan in his chair. In excessive alarm, Mrs Harcourt rang for assistance, despatched a servant for medical aid, and sent for Mrs Timms, who was with her patient ; but nothing availed. Life was gone before any of those summoned could reach the spot, and their care was required for the widow, who was carried to her room in violent hysterics. Eleanor had been alarmed by the unusual sounds in the house, and was aware something had happened before Dr Selby came up stairs and gently broke the intelligence to her. She was, of course, distressed, for her guardian had always shewn her every kindness, but she was recovering sufficient strength to be able to bear the shock, and Dr Selby left her with the satisfactory assurance she would not eventually suffer. He did not know then it was only a portion of what she had to bear, and it was well for her that she had a little respite before learning the whole.

Mrs Harcourt, when sufficiently calm, in a day or two, to look at the letters which had been received by her husband, gathered enough from them to be in some measure prepared for the news conveyed in a communication addressed to her by Mr Har-

court's partner. There was kind sympathy throughout, and the writer was himself a fellow-sufferer. The bank had in fact stopped payment, dragged down by liabilities it was wholly unable to meet. The partners had for some time feared the impending ruin but had held on as long as there was any hope. This had vanished, and the conviction of such being the case had proved fatal to Mr Harcourt. There was a sum of money settled on his wife, which might save her from actual want, but the whole of Miss Harcourt's large fortune was gone, and it was impossible to say whether any portion of it could ever be recovered. Mrs Harcourt's state of mind rendered her little able to understand particulars, and she only comprehended that she had suddenly become a very poor widow. To the faithful Timms was again committed the task she could not undertake, that of informing Miss Harcourt of the sad circumstances which had occurred. They were indeed to be pitied; no one but those who have experienced such a reverse can perhaps truly judge how much. Mrs Harcourt had nothing in herself to enable her to stand independently of external position, and her state of mind was truly deplorable.

It was with an aching heart that the good house-keeper sought Eleanor's room. She found her sitting, as usual, in her arm chair; an open book was before her, but she did not appear interested in her reading. Mrs Timms fulfilled her mission

carefully and well, and was for the most part listened to in silence. When she had concluded, Eleanor inquired whether Mrs Harcourt had sent her any message, or would see her? The lady had said, that, there being still danger of infection, she would write as soon as able; and Eleanor was well satisfied for the present with the arrangement.

Before many days, the banker's funeral took place, and the time came when the stern reality had to be looked in the face. Everything in the house was of course to be sold as it stood; and Mrs Harcourt wrote, and sent, the promised letter to Eleanor. It began with much commiseration for her own misfortunes (which were indeed heavy enough to make any one feel pity for them), "she was quite at a loss what to do. For the present, her plan was to go into the country, and join Juliana. Eleanor was probably aware of the distressing circumstances in which she was placed; she had barely enough to maintain herself and child, and therefore was quite unable to offer her a home, but hoped she might find a comfortable one with other friends, or perhaps with her brother. In the mean time, as some of the establishment were to remain for a short space in the house, she would have leisure to make her arrangements for leaving it when her strength permitted. Mrs Harcourt would have expressed all her good wishes in person, but as she was so soon to see Juliana, it would, of course,

be highly wrong of her to run any risk. Their meeting must therefore be delayed to a later, and she hoped a happier, period.

Eleanor, as she read, felt all her desolation. Mrs Timms had, with kindly tact, withdrawn after giving her the letter. She was alone, weakened by illness, and saddened by the loss of her guardian, who, though the cause of her ruin, had always treated her kindly, and would never thus have deserted her. She buried her face in her hands, and did, what was unusual with her—wept long and bitterly. Then came a review of her real situation. “Her friends,” Mrs Harcourt had said; there were many calling themselves such who would doubtless gladly have asked her to pay them a visit, but none who would have afforded more substantial assistance; besides, she really had no claim to expect it. Their intercourse had been on the give-and-take principle, and no debts remained on either side; they were perfectly quits, and the score of each was clear. Then came the thoughts of her brother. She had often heard from him, but not so frequently as would have been the case had she been more interested in his work. She knew he loved her well, but many months must elapse ere she could receive his answers to letters now written; and besides, though not doubting his generosity, his own means were not large; she would not take from them, and he was not likely to ask her to go out to him. It was evident she

must stand or fall by her own resources, and she began, with a sinking heart, to calculate what was at her command. The nurse for her illness had been paid weekly, Dr Selby at each visit, and the house-keeping bills, she knew, were paid up, so that she was saved pressure on that score; there was only a bill owing at the chemist's, which she thought could not be very large. Her own allowance had, when she first came, been settled at two hundred a year, and Mr Harcourt had paid the quarter for her only a few days before his death. In consequence of having been ill, her bills were fewer than usual, and she hoped some money which was laid by might more than cover them. There was therefore between fifty and sixty pounds on which she could reckon, besides a good many ornaments that might be parted with; and her wardrobe being very handsomely supplied, might be made to last her for some time. But one thing she saw, that she must leave her present abode without delay, and adapt herself to her altered means as best she might. It was no wonder she felt well nigh crushed; she had, it is true, a proud and undaunted spirit, but none of the best comfort, the only support for the time of trouble.

Dr Selby had no idea of the true state of the case, though aware of the ruin which had fallen upon the house. He was good and benevolent, and had he known how forlorn and unprotected Eleanor was, or how acceptable a shelter for a



short time with his wife would have been, he would at once have proposed it. His fees had been, since Mr Harcourt's death, constantly refused, and thinking all parties would gladly be relieved from offering them any longer, he now told Eleanor that as she was recovered sufficiently not to need his attendance, he should only come on some future day to pay her a friendly visit.



## CHAPTER VII.

### *A Haven by the Sea.*

My soul, sit thou a patient looker-on,  
Judge not the play before the play is done.  
Her plot hath many changes,—every day  
Speaks a new scene,—the last act crowns the play.

—QUARRLES.

“Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown,  
With that wild wheel we go not up or down,  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.”

—IDYLLS OF THE KING.

MRS HARCOURT had fulfilled her intention of joining her daughter, taking Minette with her. The other servants had been discharged, with the exception of Mrs Timms and Sarah, who were to remain in charge of the house until it was finally given up. The housekeeper was the only person really aware of the situation in which Eleanor was placed; and it was from her that the latter sought counsel and advice as to what immediate steps could be taken, about which she was as inexperienced as a child. Mrs Timms, who was a motherly-hearted old woman, had considered the

case as though for a daughter of her own, and had thought of a plan which appeared good to her, if Miss Harcourt would not think it too humble a one. She had a sister some years younger than herself, who was also a widow; her husband had been a farmer, and after his death, though not left destitute, she had kept, and was still keeping, a little dame's school, in a nice healthy sea-side watering-place. She was assisted in her labours by a grown-up daughter, who also took in needle-work, and the two thus contrived to be very comfortable. Their school was well frequented, and their house, though not large, was a clean and tidy cottage, standing in a garden; besides a tiny sitting-room, which they seldom used, there was a bed-room more than they wanted, over it, which, though not grand, was clean. Dr Selby had said Miss Harcourt ought to go to the country, and have sea air, and this would be just the thing. It was useless to make any plan for obtaining her own living, when not able to walk the length of the street. The first thing to do was to get back her strength; and she knew her sister, Mrs Wood, would only be too proud if Miss Harcourt would occupy the two little rooms, where she would get at least fresh country air and kind attendance. Eleanor listened with gratitude; it seemed to her a very haven. She would not, indeed, be a burden to Mrs Wood; but if the latter had no objection to receive her as a lodger, she could pay

enough to make it a help to the schoolmistress, and her means would last till she hoped to be quite strong again, and able to decide upon some course for the future. Mrs Timms was commissioned to write by that day's post, and a favourable answer was soon received from Mrs Wood, who seemed to be a second edition of the housekeeper. Nothing therefore remained but to pack up, and having tried her strength a little, to seek her new abode.

None knew what Eleanor suffered during the ensuing week. She seldom allowed herself to speak of the past, or of what was before her, save in gratitude to her humble friend, though her life-blood seemed at times as if frozen up. She never wept now; but she thought occasionally her heart must stop beating, and had for some time lost rather than gained strength; but when the idea occurred that perhaps after all, she might not eventually recover, her only hope was that she should leave enough money behind to bury her. There were numerous inquiries and cards left at the door, but no one was let in; they were informed that Miss Harcourt was nearly recovered, and that there being no longer any danger of infection, she was to leave town in a few days. The world concluded, of course, that she was going to join Mrs Harcourt.

Two persons only were admitted; one was Dr Selby, who came to see how his old patient was getting on.. She received him in the drawing-

room, and though a wreck to what she had been when last he saw her there, no one knew better what reason there was to be glad of her presence at all; he thought he knew enough to account for the colourless face, and dark circles round the eyes, and told her cheerfully he was glad to hear she was going to the sea-side, as it was all that was wanting to make her herself again.

The other visitor was Mr Deane, her late guardian's partner, who felt she was entitled to some explanations from himself. To these she listened with silent calmness, thanked him for coming, and only when he was taking his leave, inquired if there was any one charged to ascertain on her behalf what part of the money might eventually be paid. Mr Deane said that there was no person whose special business it would be, but that if she would authorise him to do so, he would place her affairs in competent hands.

A flush passed over her face, as she replied, "I fear, Mr Deane, that is impossible; you have forgotten I am now poor, and cannot afford to pay lawyers."

"Then, Miss Harcourt, your interests must be my concern, for the sake of my late partner; I at least may work if I like without wages; only say that you trust me." She was too glad to do so; and he took his leave, as ignorant as others that she stood alone to win her way in the world as best she might.

In a few more days her preparations were completed, and a place secured in the coach by Mrs Timms, who would have accompanied her, but she had already got another situation, to which she was going immediately; if not the pleasantest, it was at least the best plan. "No one could tell," said she to Sarah, helping her to close a box for Miss Harcourt, "no one knew how soon they might want all the money they could earn." Sarah looked surprised, and wondered if old age was making Mrs Timms covetous; but Eleanor, who was present, and could not mistake the look cast at herself, felt her heart full of gratitude, though she fervently hoped she should never burden her old friend's kindness, which had already been more than she could ever repay.

Nothing now remaining to be done, she told those who waited on her that she would go out a little, as the air would do her good, and it was well to try what she was equal to before the great fatigue of the next day. They judged it best to let her do as she liked, and she set forth, determining, by way of an object for her walk, to pay the bill owing at the chemist's. Those who know the overpowering effect of fresh air, after long confinement from illness, will not wonder, that with so many other feelings joined to it, Eleanor's knees trembled, and her head swam, to a degree which, reduced as she was, rendered it difficult for her to walk at all. The distance was not great, yet almost too much

for her, and she was tremblingly anxious to meet no one she knew. With her thick veil, however, she passed unnoticed by all, save the little sweeper boy at the corner of the square, who had seen her drive by too frequently not to recognize her at once; but it was seldom that she walked past, except on her road to church, and he had never received anything from her. To-day, however, she gave him twopence, and he thought the handsome lady looked sadder than usual. Could such as she be in trouble? And the twopence; were they but the first of many gifts, the beginning of better days for him? He little knew that the giver, as she looked at his hungry face and threadworn garments, saw only the form of a brother in distress.

Eleanor's last evening in London was, like her first, a solitary one. The following morning found her seated in the coach, on her way to the country, after a sorrowful parting with Sarah, whose kind care and devotion had been liberally rewarded both in word, and in more substantial proofs of Eleanor's gratitude for her services. Mrs Timms accompanied her to the office, and recommended the young lady to the special care of the guard, with whom she was acquainted; she lingered till the last parting moment, and then having obtained many promises of hearing from the traveller, the good housekeeper turned her steps homeward, and Eleanor was left alone on a new stage in the journey of life.

The remaining passengers, were a woman with a child on her lap, and a gentleman, who after the first few miles, during which he read a newspaper, settled himself to sleep for the remainder of the time. The fourth seat was unoccupied, which was some relief, but the day was intensely hot, and no storm-tossed mariner ever looked more eagerly for the port towards which he was beating up, than did Eleanor to get a glimpse of the little watering-place to which they were bound. With her head aching from fatigue, and the novelty of her situation, she was rejoiced when in the evening they arrived at their destination, and on the coach stopping in what appeared to be a market place, to hear a cheerful voice inquire, whether there was a young lady inside?

The Queen with the crown on, without which the children fancy that royal lady is never seen, would not have been half as welcome a sight to Eleanor, as was the elderly pleasant-looking woman in a cloth cloak and black bonnet, who now came to the door, pronouncing at the same time the name of the person she sought, whom she carefully helped out of the coach, and calling a stout boy by the name of "Bill," desired him to get Miss Harcourt's boxes, and take them home. "You may trust him Miss, Bill will bring all safely, and perhaps as it is only a step you might be able to walk, if you would take my arm." Eleanor was glad of the support, for with the best will, she was very



doubtful of her powers ; the evening, however, was cool, and the air refreshed her, so that they were not long in reaching the cottage, where Bill had contrived to get before them. Mrs Wood was full of fears when they crossed the garden, that Miss Harcourt would find herself sadly disappointed by the extreme smallness of the accommodation, but Eleanor assured her she might make herself perfectly easy, as she was only too happy to be allowed to come. It is true the cottage was so tiny, she never remembered having spent more than a few minutes in such a small place ; rooms of a kind she had sometimes wondered how people lived in them, but she was already growing humbler, and thought, as she said, that they would do very nicely. The furniture in them was perfectly clean, and the dimity curtains as white as bleaching could make them ; the low latticed window which looked into the garden was surrounded with a luxuriant honeysuckle, completely festooning it, and filling the little room with its fragrance ; beyond, and rather below, you could see the grey tower of the old church, and further still the blue sea, with the white sails which were continually moving over its waters. Close into the window was drawn a little sofa, which did not look in keeping with the rest of the things around, but this Eleanor was too inexperienced to discover, and she did not know, while resting on it, and already breathing life from the fresh air and sweetness around her, that it had

been just got by Mrs Timms' direction, who had told her sister Miss Harcourt would often want to lie down, and had sent the money for the purchase. When she had been refreshed by the nice meal and well-made tea that Mrs Wood had prepared for her, she already felt better, notwithstanding her journey, than when she left London, though not sorry to seek her bedroom early. And here, on the first night of her journey alone in the world, many a sad thought came crowding over her, for which the kindness of her new friends could have found no cordial. Alas! for those who thus faint, and know not of the "shadow of the great rock in a weary land."

It had been arranged that Susan should take the duties of the school, and thus leave her mother free to attend upon their new inmate, so that, though before she was dressed, Eleanor heard from her window the sound of merry voices, and little feet that pattered over the threshold, she found on again seeking the sitting-room, that Mrs Wood was there preparing her breakfast, and she insisted on her lodger sitting down in the pleasant window till all was ready. The spell of brightness had not vanished since the preceding evening, but was even more revealed by the cheerful light, and as Eleanor leant languidly back and watched the neat figure so intent on ministering to her comfort, an exclamation escaped her lips, something akin to her old companion's "How strange."

"Did you speak, ma'am?" asked Mrs Wood, and she paused in her task.

Eleanor smiled; "I was only wondering," said she, "how it was that you were taking so much trouble, for a person you never saw till yesterday."

"Oh, was that all ma'am? I was quite afraid something was amiss, for we are not used to do things as you have always had them; but as to the trouble, ma'am, you need say nothing about it."

"But I hope, Mrs Wood, that Mrs Timms told you that I am now very poor, and cannot afford to pay you much for all you might do for me."

"Little or much, or nothing at all ma'am, it's all the same; and you're welcome to stay as long as we can make you comfortable. Mrs Timms was fond of you, and I'm fond of my sister, that's just it, and besides, it's little enough I can do to shew my gratitude to the kind Providence that has been so good to me;" and the schoolmistress went on with her proceedings, without in the least supposing that her words could seem strange to the listener.

Many were the hours that Eleanor spent at the little cottage window. She had brought books and work, both of which she could enjoy on her sofa; and though far too weak to walk, and unable now to think of a conveyance, she was content to remain quiet, and feel sure of gaining strength in the pure air, of which she was getting the full

benefit; and the kindness of Mrs Wood and her daughter was unfailing. She had abundant food for her thoughts during these solitary hours, which, at a later period, she owned had been good for her, and were never regretted. The quiet and loneliness hushed the spirit which had been so turbulent; the hours of weariness and misfortune were to do their appointed work. Sometimes she would leave the door a little open, that she might hear the hum of the children, whom Susan was instructing in the opposite room. A class, rather older than the rest, were in the habit of repeating every morning the collect they had learned the preceding Sunday at another school, and Eleanor one day heard from a little voice the words, "O God, the strength of all that trust in Thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy;" the sound fell, and the remainder of the sentence was lost, but another took it up, and then another, till through the whole class had passed the same supplication. It was a sound of olden times; she remembered how she too, as a child, had been taught the same lessons, and how they had been forgotten. Might she still seek for the strength she had so long despised?

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Light at Eventide.

"The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

How quiet shews the woodland scene !  
Each flower and tree, its duty done,  
Reposing in decay serene,  
Like weary men when age is won.  
Such calm old age as conscience pure,  
And self-commanding hearts insure,  
Waiting their summons to the sky,  
Content to live, but not afraid to die.

—CHRISTIAN YEAR.

MANY weeks were passed by Eleanor in the quiet life we have described. Her days were solitary ; but in the evening, when the duties of the school were over, and the children were dispersed, Mrs Wood used to present herself with the tea tray, and would afterwards bring her work and sit by her lodger, as she lay on the sofa in the cool evening air. Eleanor was well amused with the conversation of her humble friend, and one evening she asked her to relate some anecdotes of

her past life, when she was a farmer's wife, and whether her home had been in that part of the country.

"It was about ten miles off, ma'am. My father lived near there, and his father before him, so that we all belong to this part of the country. A pretty country too; the tall trees and the hedges that lay round our fields would seem like old friends if I could see them again. But other hands are there now, and one Sam Simpson has, I hear, taken the lease."

"Were you happy there, Mrs Merton?"

"Right happy, ma'am, right happy. Both my children were born there, Susan and my boy at sea; and my father and mother lie buried in our little churchyard. Children's cradles, and parents' graves, they always make a place dear; and yet once I did think I should never have any happiness there at all."

"How was that?" asked Eleanor.

"Well, then, it was all my own fault, Miss; and indeed if you like to hear, though I'm fair ashamed to think of those days, yet maybe if ever you see others throwing away their happiness like me, it might do them good to hear Jane Merton's history; and I will tell you, ma'am, if it will not weary you, though it does me no credit."

"I was very young, Miss Harcourt, when I was married, and had been much spoilt, for my sister, who was many years older, left the neighbourhood

with her husband when I was still a child. I was just sixteen when John Wood took service with my father. I did not like John much at first ; he had always a bit of a temper, and was hard to manage at times ; but we were thrown a great deal together, and he was steady and good, and in the end, Miss, not to make my story too long, we liked each other, and as my father made no objection, we were married. It was not a bad match for John, for, as I said before, there were only two of us ; and I felt as no wife ought to do, that I had done John a favour rather in marrying him.

“We took a little homestead near my father’s. It was very small ; but said John, ‘If I am industrious, and you’re thrifty, Jane, no fear but we shall do very well.’ But though he worked very hard, I must confess I did not do my part as well, and when he came home from work he was often cross, and that vexed me, because I thought he was crosser than he need have been. The fact was, he had been accustomed to his sister’s ways, which were much more handy and tidy than mine ; and often when I had been trying to put things a little neat as I thought, he would come home and say, they were all in a muddle, as he called it. Indeed, afterwards I knew this had been the case, but I thought he might have been kinder spoken about it, and then I should have tried to do better.

“I should never have fancied you had been an untidy person, Mrs Wood,” said Eleanor.

“It is true nevertheless, ma’am, and John used to get very angry with me; and at last, as he was so cross every evening, I determined to take no more pains; so I used to sit doing my darning without noticing anything he said; only just to say sometimes, I knew I could never please him by anything I did. But I hope I do not weary you, Miss.”

“Not at all, Mrs Wood; I am much obliged to you for taking the trouble to amuse me.”

“Well then, ma’am, things went on in this way from bad to worse, and at last one evening John said he would see whether folks were pleasanter elsewhere, and left the house. I knew very well where he was gone. It was his first visit to the White Bear, but not the last, for from that time he went out oftener than he stayed at home. My Susan was born soon after, and I used to sit rocking her of an evening, and thinking what a bad husband my child’s father was, instead of perceiving how much of the fault was my own.”

“But it is very hard to bear always being found fault with,” said Eleanor; “one cannot always have patience when others are unjust; and yet you said you had been very happy, Mrs Wood.”

“That was afterwards, ma’am, thanks to a friend such as I hardly deserved to have. One night when my husband came home, I saw by the way he walked in he was not sober. ‘John,’ said I, ‘you’ve been drinking.’ ‘And if I have,’



said he, 'you've no one but yourself to blame. If you had kept the house tidy, and looked cheerful yourself, I should never have gone to the public, so you need say nothing about that.' 'Indeed,' said I, 'if you had not been so cross, it would have been a pleasure to keep the house neat, only you're never satisfied any way.' 'It's a pity you married me,' says he. 'It is indeed,' said I, 'and so we came to bitter angry words. I cried all night, and the best part of next day; but John never spoke a word to me. I shall never forget that miserable time; but as I had sowed, so I reaped.'

"I cannot fancy how you were ever happy after that," said Eleanor.

"It was many a long day, Miss, before happiness came, because I did not look to the right source for it. We made up our quarrel enough to speak to each other as if nothing had happened, and we went on as usual. But we neither of us had the love of God in our hearts, so each blamed the other, and neither tried to do better. And so many miserable weeks passed; but I had one blessing in my child, who throve nicely; and though at times I felt unhappy, and thought there was nothing worth living for, yet when I looked at the baby in my arms, and saw what a sweet little thing she was, I felt there was still something which it would be hard indeed to give up or go away from."

"How old was your baby then, Mrs Wood?"

"She was thirteen months old, and whenever I looked at her laughing face I felt less lonely. Just at this time John got a letter to say his father was very ill, and before he could set out next day to see him, another came telling him of his death. However, he went all the same to the funeral, and to see his mother, of whom he was very fond."

"Did they live far off?"

"About forty miles; a long way then, for there was no railroad to the place. Before John went, he had a long talk with me about bringing his mother home to live with us. I did not much like the idea, but he was in great trouble, and I could not feel unkind to him then; so I told him to do as he liked, and if the old lady thought she could be comfortable with us, to bring her back with him, and I would have the little spare room ready for her when they arrived. He seemed glad I did not make any difficulty, and thanked me. Then he harnessed the old brown horse Hazel, and drove off."

"Was he gone long?"

"He was away a week, which seemed longer than I had fancied it would. However, at last, on Monday morning I got a few lines from him, to say he hoped to get home the next evening, and bring his mother with him. So all Tuesday I was making the room ready, and for once in a way I dusted and swept much more than usual; but a

badly kept house will not look nice all at once, and mine might have been brighter. Still things were pretty tidy, and all the time I was busy, I kept wondering what old Mrs Wood would be like, whether she was very old and cross, or whether I should really get fond of her. Then I began to think, as I always did, that it didn't signify, I couldn't help how things were, it must be left to chance. Ah, I little knew what a blessing was coming to our house!"

"Then she did turn out a nice old woman!" said her listener.

"Indeed she did, Miss, as you shall hear. It was the middle of May, and the evenings were very long. I had tea ready by five o'clock, and sat down with Susan in my arms to wait for them; but the shadows of the old apple-trees in the orchard got longer and longer, and still there was no sound. At last I heard Hazel's step in the lane, so I went to the gate, and there they were just coming down the road. 'We're later than we thought to be, Jane,' said my husband as he drew up, 'but safe at last.' 'Now, mother, let me help you down here; Jane and I hope you'll soon feel at home.' With that Mrs Wood got out of the cart, and came to where I stood. What she thought of me I never knew; nothing very good, I fear, for I was not very tidy; and that and fretting together don't improve a young woman's looks. But I remember very well when she came in and sat down,

after having laid off her bonnet and shawl, what I thought of her. I had no idea old age could be so beautiful."

"Beautiful!" exclaimed Eleanor. "How old was she?"

"She was just turned seventy when she came to live with us; but there is a beauty in some old age, I think, which, though so different, is as attractive as that of youth. One meets with it occasionally, but it is very rare, and perhaps only seen fully in aged Christians. I have never met with any one pleasanter to look at than Mrs Wood."

"Do tell me what she was like."

"I will describe her to you as she sat at the door after tea with little Susan on her lap. She was of middling height, and was neither very stout nor very thin; she had good features, and still a beautiful complexion. In youth she must have been very handsome; and though that was passed, I often doubted if she could ever have looked better than now. Her snow-white hair was drawn smoothly back under her widow's cap, and a fine white muslin handkerchief covered her neck and throat, and was neatly pinned over the front of her black dress. I did not know why, but she seemed in the right place, sitting with the setting sun shining on her face."

"Had her life been a happy one?"

"Like all others, she had had trouble as well as joy; but one great blessing had been hers,—she

and her husband had feared the Lord from youth to old age, when one was taken, and the other left for a little while. In all the changes and chances of life, they had one sure refuge from trouble, and the old woman's witness was always this, that goodness and mercy had followed her all the days of her life, and that Almighty Love was the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. But it was many weeks before she talked in this way to me; for she was not one of your great talkers, always setting things to rights, and extolling themselves. Very quiet and peaceful was Granny Wood."

"Was that what you called her?"

"It was her name among the children of the two married daughters, and Susan, as soon as she could speak, called her so too; so we all came to do the same, and among ourselves no one ever said anything but granny."

"It must be pleasant to be an old woman like that," said Eleanor.

"It always seemed to me, Miss, that Mrs Wood's chief beauty was the peace and calm brightness that was about her, and it was this which made her really so well-looking. She always reminded me of that first summer evening, when she sat in the door-way, with the sun's golden light streaming on her. Some such light never seemed to leave granny."

There was a pause, and then Eleanor said, "Go on please, Mrs Wood, if you are not tired. I want

to hear of the time when granny lived with you, and when you became so happy. I suppose she had something to do with it; perhaps she spoke to your husband; surely he would listen to so good a mother. What did she say to his going out in the evenings?"

"I must answer your questions one by one, Miss. Granny certainly had a great deal to do with our becoming happy, but not exactly in the way you think. John did not go out the first evening after she came, and I began to hope her being there would keep him at home. But it had become quite a habit with him, and he had made friends with a set who liked to keep him of their party, because he was always sociable and merry; so he soon went out again as usual, as a matter of course, only saying, 'Jane and baby will be company, mother, now you know each other, so I'll go and see my friends a bit.'"

"What did she say?"

"Not much at first; dear old granny! I am sure she soon saw things were all going wrong, but she only watched, and it wasn't much that escaped her quick eyes. Of a morning after breakfast she would take her knitting and tell me she would look after Susan while I was busy. Then she would place her large Bible open on a table, out of the way of my work, and sometimes read a little, and then do a piece of the stocking in her hand, or talk to the child. I felt sure she always

took notice of how I went about my business, and every now and then she would say something to me ; but she was slow to blame, and though many things seemed to surprise her, it was long before she spoke of them.

“But the thing she took to heart most was to see my unhappy look, and to hear the sharp words which often passed between John and me. Still I was better than before she came ; for, like every one else, I was beginning to love her dearly, and when we sat together of an evening at work I sometimes felt almost happy. I remember the first time she said anything was when I had remarked that she must often grieve for her old home, and her husband who was gone. ‘I do feel sorrowful sometimes, Jane,’ was her answer, ‘and think I should like to hear his voice. But you know, it is not as if I were young, as you are ; we shall soon be together again, and are only parted for a very little time. My dear, she added kindly, ‘I wish you and John were as happy as Robin and I when we were first married. What has come, Jane, between you two young folk, who ought to be one?’

“So then, as she asked, though I had never before complained of my husband, I just told her that we had made a great mistake when we married.

“I think I can see her quiet, grave face now ; but she only said—

“‘Indeed, that is very sad ; but as it is too late to

undo the past, all that can be done is to make the best of it.'

"By this time I was thoroughly angry; it had become an easy thing to put me out of temper, and granny didn't seem to have a bit of feeling for me. 'How should she know,' thought I, 'what it is to have a husband that doesn't care for you?' So I answered quickly, 'I don't see how any best can be made of it, when a man spends all his evenings at the public, and only comes home to scold his wife.'

"'Yes,' was her answer; 'it must be hard to bear. But John was steady once; what has made him leave home in this way? Was there no reason at first?'

"'His fancy, granny. He thought the place was not good enough for him, so he went elsewhere. If he had not been so cross, there would have been some pleasure in keeping things tidy,' and I put down my work and cried bitterly.

"'Poor child,' said granny, looking at me, 'you are very miserable.'

"'Wretched, granny! I've no comfort in anything; nothing but unhappiness for me.'

"'Hush! Jane,' she answered, 'don't make your misery first, and then hold it tight. Just let us think together, and see if nothing can be done.'

"I did not answer, so she went on.

"'John has not been quite all he ought to you, but we will not talk of that now. I want you to



think about yourself. To make the best of this life, Jane, people must be the best of themselves. Do you understand, my dear, what I mean ?

“I did not; so she continued, ‘I mean, they must be nothing less than what God has intended them to be. Do you know what we all are, or at least ought to be ?’

“‘Well,’ I answered, pettishly, ‘I suppose I’m John’s wife, whatever others are.’

“‘Yes, you are John’s wife; but before you became that you were, or should have been, something else. Do you not remember what we all are ?’

“‘Yes, granny, at least I think I did once;’ but here I stopped, for I had long ceased to care for such things, and though I went to church sometimes, and sat on a seat there till the service was over, I came home none the better for what I had heard.

“‘You know, Jane,’ said granny gently, seeing I stopped, ‘we are all God’s servants, because we have been bought with a price more precious than gold and silver; you know at least what that was.’

“I did know in words, so I answered,

“‘The blood of our Saviour Christ.’

“‘The blood of our Saviour,’ she repeated reverently.

“‘Now, Jane, those who are servants must be doing their Master’s work. If you are one, you have something to do like others.’

“‘I am sure,’ I began, ‘it is very hard.’

“‘My dear,’ said granny, ‘I am not blaming

you, only helping you to find out if you are doing what you have to do in life, serving your Master. It is very hard often to do our work, but do not forget that if we ask for it we shall have strength to do all that comes in the way of duty. You say it is hard ; have you ever asked for this strength ?’

“ ‘I was silent. It was long since I had prayed at all even in form except, as I said, occasionally at church.

“ ‘And then,’ said Mrs Wood, ‘after having asked for strength, we must make humble use of it, and endeavour to do our duty in the station of life where we have been placed. And, Jane, when we once love the Saviour, we shall shew it by our anxiety to do as He commands us. All service is easy and delightful to those who have love in their hearts, and when we have once found forgiveness, we shall serve for love. We shall ‘love Him, because He first loved us ;’ and we shall try to do His will perfectly ourselves, instead of fretting, if we think our friends and relations are not doing their duty towards us ; we shall remember it will be no excuse for ours being left undone. If we have been saved by faith in the cross of Christ, we shall have enough reason to shew our thankfulness each day by the lives we lead.’

“ ‘Ah, but granny,’ I said sorrowfully, ‘I am not such a servant ; I have not been forgiven, and know nothing of the love you have been speaking of.’

“ ‘Then ask for that forgiveness, Jane, and if you do so sincerely you will have it. Take Christ’s yoke upon you, and ask to be made a servant. Sinful we all are, yet may be accepted for the Saviour’s sake, and made clean by His righteousness.’ ”

“ And much more she said, ma’am, of which I have forgotten the exact words ; but that evening, and every day after, granny tried to lead me to better things, and even that night I endeavoured to pray as she said, and felt better and happier than I had done for a long time.”

“ And about your husband,” said Eleanor, “ I want so much to hear when you became happier with him.”

“ Well, once when I had spoken to granny, Miss, though she blamed, yet she was so kind that I was not afraid of talking to her, and besides I really did wish to become such a servant as she had said we ought all to be ; and in time I came to see that whatever we have to do must be done heartily, as ‘ unto the Lord, and not unto men.’ ” Granny now asked me every day to read to her out of her large Bible, as she said it began to hurt her eyes. I think, too, she wanted me to read it more steadily than I had done before ; and whenever I was in difficulty, she always could say something to make it plainer. ‘ There is nothing like the Bible,’ she would say ; ‘ we can find something to guide us in all trials and in all temptations.’ ” And gradually

as I began to understand all the comfort to be found in it myself, I came to wish John had it also, for now I felt as if I loved him more than ever, and wished he were happy too. So one day I ventured to speak to granny again about him, and ask her what she thought I could do to get him to stay at home again ?

“ ‘Well, my dear,’ said she, ‘as you have asked me, I think there are two or three things that you might do, if you do not mind my telling you.’

“ ‘I said, ‘No.’

“ ‘One thing, I think, when he is angry and speaks quick, a Christian wife, which you wish now to be, should answer kindly; you know who said, “Blessed are the meek;” and many times “a soft answer turneth away wrath.”’

“ ‘Yes, granny, we read that first text yesterday, and I thought then that one of my sins was answering again.’

“ ‘Well then, Jane, ask for grace to overcome it; and you will be enabled to do so. Then John is very neat and tidy, and sometimes I think things might look brighter than they often look. I know you take much more pains than you used, because it is your duty; but remember, (to say nothing about John), you should do all you have to do as well as possible.’

“ ‘I had grown much more humble of late, so I promised sorrowfully, ‘I would try still more.’

“ ‘Do, and then, Jane, your husband would like

to see a bright, good-tempered wife ; and, with so many blessings as you have, why should you not let your thankfulness be seen in your countenance? And remember, true servants must shew by their appearance the comfort and happiness they have found in their service, and win others to the same. Now, I have found fault enough for one night, and here is Susan fast asleep and ready to be laid in her cradle.’”

“What a dear old woman Mrs Wood must have been !” exclaimed Eleanor.

“She was, indeed ; day by day she led me to the happiness of which she had so much. But it did not come all at once. Evil tempers are not soon subdued, and so I found it ; and often when working away to make things tidy, I would say, ‘It’s easier to make a clean floor, granny, than to mend the least bit of one’s self.’

“‘Yes,’ she would say, ‘and you can’t do it, Jane, at all ; but you know who can make you clean every whit, so no need to despair.’”

“And did your husband take any notice ?”

“Not much. I think he was kinder than before, but he still went out from habit. To do him justice, I must say he never drank much ; but many a good penny went that way, when times were hard and things dear. His mother more than once asked him to stop, but he said he liked to see his friends, ‘and Jane will keep you company, mother, and she’s in very good spirits too,’ said

he one night, so you won't be dull.' 'Oh indeed, John,' said Granny, 'we're very comfortable, only as you don't stay you can't see it,' and with that he laughed, and went away.

"We were indeed, as she said, very happy of an evening, and though I wished he would stay, sometimes at least, I was not now the miserable woman that had gone to meet granny the first day she arrival. The autumn was passing quickly, and we were already thinking about Christmas. Susan was able to run about, and I was now beginning to find joy and peace in believing; not indeed granny's settled peace, but at least I knew something about it, and hoped for such as hers some day."

"Did your husband's mother live long with you?"

"She was with us about two years. Just before one Christmas Susan fell ill; so ill that the doctor said there was no hope of her recovery. Ah! then I knew what a blessing she had been, and how hard it would be to part with her. All day long she lay in my arms, with her eyes shut, like a dead weight, without moving. I never gave her up night or day, and I thought my heart would break; only I knew now better where to look for comfort. John was quite as much troubled; for he dearly loved the child, and all the time she was ill he never went out. She was at the worst on Christmas Eve. I sat watching her, thinking each hour would be her last, but I was too worn

out either to speak or cry. At last granny said, 'Give me the child a bit, Jane, and lie down for a little ; for you're ill yourself for want of rest.' I was too worn out to refuse, and she said she would call me the minute they saw any change, and so I went up stairs, and threw myself on the bed. I meant to stay awake and go down very soon, but I had had no rest for three nights, and in a few minutes fell into a heavy sleep. It seemed a very short time till I awoke, but many hours had passed, and the dim light was struggling in through the window. I jumped up, for Granny was standing by the bed with Susan in her arms. 'Don't be afraid Jane,' said she, 'your child has been given back to you again, and will live now, for she has been quietly asleep for a long time ; see, she knows you again.' And truly when I stooped over my baby she smiled at me, which she had not done since she was taken ill."

"Oh, Mrs Wood," said Eleanor, "how glad you must have been !"

"Indeed I was thankful, ma'am, and I sat down and began to cry. 'Come,' said granny, 'take Susan down now, and go to your husband, who wants to rejoice with you this Christmas morning.' So then I carried her below, and there stood John, who had been up all night with granny. I need not tell you all he said ; but she had been a wise as well as a good mother, and kept her word till her son's heart listened to her voice, when he felt

the great goodness which had spared our child. To make my story short, that winter's morning was the happiest of my life; for it made us one again. When breakfast was ready, I called granny, and as soon as the meal was over she said, 'Jane cannot leave her little daughter, John; but you and I will go to church to return thanks for the mercies we have received.' Then she put on her scarlet cloak, and best black silk bonnet, and I watched them all the way down the lane, which was white with snow. I went with them in spirit, but I had joy at home too, for there was Christmas in my heart, and Christmas gifts were with me also from my Lord and Master; for, had He not given me back my sweet baby, who lay sleeping beside me, and my husband's love, which I had fancied was gone for ever?"

"Did Susan soon get quite well?"

"Very soon; now that the turn was passed, she was almost herself again in a week's time, though not very strong; but she got plenty of nursing from her father, who would keep her on his knee the whole evening, and never seemed to think of going out, though no one said anything about it. She was getting quite round when New Year's Eve came, and lay sound asleep in her cradle, while we sat by the fire waiting to hear the church bell ring the old year out. Suddenly John said, 'Why, Jane, where did you get the new bars to the grate; you've never been spending money on them,



I hope?' I could'nt think at first what he meant, but I soon saw when I looked. 'Why, they're only the old bars, John, that I've been cleaning.' 'Your cleaning has done some good,' said he. 'Oh, they shall be better still before I've done with them,' I answered cheerfully. 'They're brighter already than those at the White Bear,' he replied. 'Likely enough,' answered granny; 'a public house is'nt much like a home with a wife in it.' 'You're right, mother,' said he, 'a good-tempered wife, too; for Jane's never cross now, and I know why, Jane. Granny has told me; and now you've got so far on the right road, you will teach me, will you not?' When I heard him say this, I felt so little able to teach any one, and so humble, yet thankful, that I began to cry. With that he came to where I was sitting, and said, 'Granny, tell me what I can do to please Jane, my good wife.' 'Love God, and keep His commandments, my son,' she answered. 'Yes, mother, and for herself?' 'Be what you have been this week past.' And just then the church bells broke out through the clear frosty night; up and down, backwards and forwards, telling all who heard that another year was gone. We said nothing for a while; then the great clock struck twelve, and granny spoke. 'A happy new year, my children, to you. May it be the beginning of a new life, and a happier one to you both.' 'Ay, mother,' answered my husband; 'new hearts, new hopes, new lives, and may you be

with us many more to see this.' That was indeed a new year, Miss, when John and I stood together, and vowed to serve the Lord, and bring up our children in His faith and fear, and granny gave us her blessing."

"But she did not live long with you after that, did she?"

"Only a few months; but they were very happy ones, for we were no longer a divided household. But granny caught a cold in the spring, from which she never recovered. She went about for a long time, then she only came down for a few hours, and at last she staid up stairs, always lying on her bed. She never complained, or said she was going to die, but we all felt it was so. Every day we read to her out of the large Bible, while Susan would sit upon the bed, and stroke her grandmother's white hair, and say she wished hers was the same colour. At last one day she passed quietly away, and we knew that granny had left us for ever."

"That was sad, when you were all so happy."

"One could not call it sad, Miss, when one thought of it, for I knew she was where she longed to be. The last time I looked at her, the evening sun streamed in at the little window, and rested on the quiet face, just as it had done that summer evening, years before, when my husband first brought his mother home. I grieved for ourselves, but not for her; and I thought of what the Bible says about entertaining '*angels unawares*.'

“They laid her in the little churchyard of our village, and the same sun shone on her grave; for it was a glorious evening when she was carried to rest. I never see the setting sun now but it reminds me of Granny Wood and all I owe her. But my story has been long enough to weary you, Miss.”

Eleanor assured her good friend this was far from being the case, and indeed she looked forward to the evenings as a treat, after being alone the whole day. At these times, she used to hear all about the place, and of the visitors who resorted to it, but who seldom strayed so far from the sea. The town was much frequented, and seemed to offer a hope to Eleanor, that she could, when able to exert herself, find employment as a daily governess, either among the strangers or the few resident families who might have young children. It appeared as if it would be the greatest possible happiness could she continue to inhabit the quiet rooms, where she had found shelter; and it would be like coming home each evening to return to the tiny house, and be welcomed by kind Mrs Wood’s cheerful countenance. She confided her plans to the good woman, who entered eagerly into them, with little doubt of being able to interest the clergyman’s wife in the scheme. There was also, she said, a lady who sometimes gave Susan work, and was always ready to do anything in her power to help another. The family came every

year to the place, and Mrs Wood promised to mention the subject the first time she saw the lady, if it appeared that Miss Harcourt was strong enough to undertake anything of the kind. For the present, however, Eleanor could only rest, and so it was for many months, during which time, while leaving her in kind keeping, we will look back at the changes which the past years had brought for her old companion.



## CHAPTER IX.

### The Angel with the Amaranthine Wreath.

I'm wearing awa, John,  
Like snaw when it thaws, John;  
I'm wearing awa, to the land o' the leal.  
—OLD SCOTCH BALLAD.

Thus calm and fearlessly they ride,  
Above life's dark and heaving tide,  
In faith their root, in truth their guide,  
In good their power.  
—H. ELLIS.

ADELA EDGERTON had long quitted the home in London to which we accompanied her many years ago on her first leaving school; but although her lot also was altered in many respects, it had not been subjected to the same vicissitudes which had marked Eleanor's path in the gay world.

Content to be what she was, and without any craving to be remarkable either for beauty or riches, she gladly resumed the old home-life *among* those she loved; but there was now this *difference*, that Adela was more to all of them

than had been possible whilst still a child. It would have been hard to say who clung to her most, and as hard to detect partiality in her, save in one respect; all her tenderest attentions were centred in her mother. She soon discovered that the information respecting Mrs Edgerton's increasing illness was correct. Without suffering, she gradually declined; there was no perceptible difference from day to day, nothing to excite continual alarm; yet each few months or even weeks found her step surely weaker, her voice fainter, her hand thinner, herself melting like the snow-flake from the face of the earth.

The medical men did not openly speak of death, and those who watched her never mentioned that of which they thought painfully. They knew there was nothing to fear for her at whatever hour the summons might come, for which, through a humble life, she had daily prepared herself; and the thought was too full of bitterness for them to open their lips upon it, whilst they could still nurse a shadow of a hope.

She herself, too, though conscious that health would not return, never alluded directly to the great change that was coming; but she strove in many ways to prepare Adela for the grief that was in store for her, endeavouring to strengthen her to bear up bravely when feeling most forlorn. She spoke often to her of the love that never faileth, and *how it had followed her all her days, and that,*

therefore, it was of experienced love and mercy she told. Whatsoever things were pure, whatsoever things were lovely, whatsoever things were excellent or of good report, with these she laboured earnestly to fill her daughter's mind. At other times she would talk to her of the period when those who are separated here shall meet to part no more; would tell her how her children that had been taken, should one day be given back; how her hope was, that sooner or later they should all be gathered in the "many mansions" of a Father's house, not one of the family here missing there.

It was soon after her return home, that Adela had become acquainted with John Harcourt; the result we have already seen. She would gladly have been his helper in a cause which had ever interested her, but she was wanted elsewhere, and in her half playful remark, that whilst he went on "foreign service," her work was clearly in the "home department," he had scarcely penetrated the deeper feeling, which lay carefully concealed from notice. No one knew how fully she had appreciated the character with which she had been brought into contact, nor had she any friendly sympathy to praise her resolution, or support her in it; for even had the world known what was past, would they have supposed it likely that there had been any sacrifice in a girl with a comfortable home refusing the hand of a missionary with but little fortune?

In the hope of Mrs Edgerton's benefiting by the change, her husband in the first summer removed to a country house, a few miles out of town; and though not always able to be there, he made his absences as few and short as possible. A temporary amendment cheered them for a while, only to be followed by a more rapid fading away, and Adela now seldom left her mother's side.

It was when she looked at her little ones, that Mrs Edgerton seemed most to feel the bitterness that was in her cup; but no murmur escaped her lips; she knew to whom she could trust them, and was not afraid. Her husband was necessarily absent for a couple of days, when Adela perceived with alarm, that she appeared weaker than at any time before. She had slept much on her couch during the morning, but suddenly opening her eyes, she said, "Adela, dear, bring the children."

Her daughter went to call them from their play; they came with rosy cheeks and bright eyes from the games in which they had been engaged, and stood round their pale mother. One tear stole down her cheek as she looked at the group, and at Mary, who had been lifted beside her. "Adela," she said, "they are so very little." "My own mother," answered her eldest born, as she stooped to kiss her, "God helping me, I will strive to be to them what you have been to me." "Bless you, my child," was the only reply audible; but a few

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minutes after, she added, "I am very weary, and must try to sleep again." Adela sent the wondering children out of the room, and followed to request nurse would prevent their making any noise that could disturb their mother. She stole back to her post with a caution that was not needed. Mrs Edgerton did not stir, and her waking was in eternity.

Nothing can less bear describing than feelings; and even the very remark of this being the fact, is trite and superfluous. Those who have ever felt, know the full poverty of words; to those who have not, such things sound but as an idle tale. We seek not, therefore, to speak of the meeting between father and daughter that evening, any more than of the ensuing week. Adela's prayer in her trouble was, that she might have strength given to fulfil her vow. But it was a sorrowful meeting when first she saw the children in their black garments, and she dwelt sadly on the reflection how little she felt in herself able to replace the loss of which they were so far from knowing the extent. The weight seemed too great whilst she remained indoors, and she took them out to the green lawn that surrounded the house.

The elder children were old enough to have some idea of what death was; but little Mary, who was not quite five years old, anxiously inquired, as she gathered daisies in the grass, "Where mamma was gone, and when she would come back again?"

Her sister, pointing to the blue sky, replied, that "Mamma was gone up to the beautiful heaven, but they should see her again, though perhaps not for a long time." "How long?" Adela could not tell. "Mary must have patience, and some day they should all go to dear mamma." The child raised her wondering eyes to the clear vault above her, and her next question was,

"Did little children ever go there too?"

"Yes, very often."

"How did they go?"

"They went," Adela said, "in different ways, but God took care of them all;" an idea in presence of which the little mind seemed to rest in full contentment; and Adela felt that she too might dwell with perfect comfort and consolation on the truths she had been teaching her infant sister.

At the end of the month they returned to their town abode; and Mr Edgerton held anxious counsel with his eldest daughter, who was now to take her mother's place as the head of his family. The only particular on which she requested his sanction to make a change was, that the daily governess, who had for the last two years taught the children, should, if willing to do so, reside in the house. She was a quiet, sensible person, who had gained the affections of her little pupils; and Adela represented, that if she were there to take charge of them when other duties required her attention, she should, with old nurse's assistance and experi-

ence, have less fear of failure than if she began by undertaking too much. Miss Flyn's presence in the schoolroom would also enable Adela to dine with her father when he returned home, and to spend the evening with him, as they had always been in the habit of doing. She felt that now she had to consider each in their turn.

To all that she proposed her father gave his willing consent; and with this new arrangement, their usual quiet and peaceful mode of life was resumed. Adela had abundance of advice offered her on all sides in the responsible position she was called on to fill. For some, of which she felt the value, she was most grateful; but much that was kindly intended, was yet so opposed to her own disposition, that it was generally dismissed with a quiet smile, and the gentle answer which was habitual. She had imbibed too much of her mother's spirit ever to become one of the minds of that iron cast, who prefer ruling by fear rather than by love—minds that, had the ordering of the natural economy of the universe been in their keeping, would accomplish their ends, or rather endeavour to accomplish them, by heavy rain, high winds, intense frosts, or a blazing sun, and in whose system a half-veiled luminary, a gentle breeze, a moderate temperature, and "the dew of heaven, which steals in silence down," would find no place.

But while declining to adopt many plans recommended to her by her friends, it was not in

any spirit of proud self-confidence that Adela entered on her new work. The last few weeks had wrought in her one of the changes which take place only a few times in a person's life, but which, when they have passed over them, leave them totally different people to what they were before. The influences which have wrought such a change may have been long at work, and yet the effect, the sense of the reality, come so unawares, that they may rise and go on their way completely altered beings from the day before; and they never return to their former self. The new spirit slumbers no more; old things have passed away, while a fresh and a burning impress, be it for good or for evil, is stamped upon them. What need for prayer, that from each such crisis shall issue the "new man," which is in Christ Jesus! The hour which had come to Adela was that,

"When yielding to a spell she cannot master,  
The soul forsakes her palace halls of youth,  
Touched by the Ithuriel wand of truth;  
Which oft in one brief hour works wonders, vaster  
Than those of Egypt's old magician host."

The days of her clinging, dependent girlhood were at an end; she must now stand in her own womanhood, at her appointed post, ever working in quiet love for good.

But, though feeling her weakness, she quailed not. The hand that had laid on her the burden, would, she knew, help to bear it; and those who

wondered how Adela continued to go forward, did not consider the strength derived each morning, in answer to the humble prayer for assistance in the duties of the day; the refreshment of the quiet hour, when each night was raised a supplication for the pardon of all that might have been amiss; praise and thanksgiving for the many mercies which had been vouchsafed. With this singleness of aim, though there were many lessons to be learnt, many things to be improved, nothing went wrong but what might be bettered.

The children, she knew, were far from faultless; she loved them too well to think so. Charlotte, who was nine, and George, who was seven, were much alike in their common sense and energy, but rather given to be sturdy in their own opinion. Louisa, who came between, was intellectual, but apt when anything went otherwise than she liked to be out of spirits, and she sunk down, under depressing circumstances, into a sort of gloom which grieved Adela to see. Henry, wild as the wind, was frank, open, and manly, but little inclined to listen to reason. Mary, "the singing bird," the joy of the house, was too sensitive, and if not carefully disciplined, might become a most unhappy woman. Thus each young plant required its own peculiar training. But Adela had been too long her mother's companion not to know the broad, high, and common ground, on which the parent would have wished it to be founded; and bearing her pre-

cepts in mind, she strove to impress upon her children the grand principles from which might spring in time all that could be wished. She endeavoured to make each one understand their own singleness of being; that each had been made by God, belonged to Him, and had to serve Him, to whom they owed everything, even her own love and care, to which they so closely clung. She always tried to bring home to them, that the one thing to be dreaded was displeasing God; the one thing to be done, to learn His will, and then to do it, and that this was to guide all actions, even of little children. She did not fear to set before them, in terms suited to their comprehension, the great and glorious truths in which they with their elder brethren had an interest.

Nor was Adela herself left without companionship for her own improvement; there was unity of mind between father and daughter. She met him in the evening with unvarying gentleness and cheerfulness, making his home still pleasant to him. Occasionally she accompanied him to the houses of those whom he esteemed, and whose good opinion he valued; at other times, he would bring a friend or two in to dinner; and when they were alone, the new book or the incidents of the day supplied topics of mutual interest. Adela's time was full, and neither mind nor body were in danger of rusting. She perceived, however, that the children, who were some of them delicate,

would benefit much by a residence in the country, and at the end of a year she persuaded her father to try the plan. Mr Edgerton, therefore, moved out of town; and a railway (a newer mode of travelling in those days than it has since become,) conveyed him to his daily business. The old London house was given up; and Adela's home thus transferred to the quiet village of Redleigh, with its English lanes and pretty woods. It was a change she never regretted; each day that passed found them peaceful and happy, while the children were visibly benefited by the country air.

John Harcourt called to pay them a farewell visit before leaving England. It was more evident than ever now, that Adela's work was at home, and they parted, satisfied that they had severally chosen the right path, and each content in quietness and confidence to find their strength.



## CHAPTER X.

### Not Murder, my Lord.

"Alas ! poor Richard."

FOR more than two years after Mr Edgerton went to reside in the country, Adela's life passed quietly on amid daily duties and cares. Pleasures, too, were not wanting, among which she reckoned the marked improvement in the children's looks: the pale faces had all vanished, and were replaced by a fresh country look of health. The careful sister also hoped that some progress had been made in mental as well as bodily growth. There came, however, a time when the party suffered some disturbance, from the boys outgrowing the discipline which had hitherto sufficed for them ; and Adela felt each day that they got more and more beyond the management of herself or Miss Flyn.

She knew that the remedy for the growing evil was, that George and Henry should be sent to



school; but Mr Edgerton had lately been much engaged, and when the subject was mentioned to him, had said it must be deferred till he was more at leisure. At the same time, he told the boys he should be extremely angry if they gave their sister any trouble; but as he was away all day, and Adela seldom worried him with complaints in the evening, the threat lost its good effect, and the pranks of the two boys were alternately of the provoking and the comic character; sometimes they nearly made their sister cry with worry and vexation, at other times her anger was unavoidably mingled with laughter at the absurdities perpetrated. On one occasion, however, whilst Miss Flyn was away for a summer holiday, the performance assumed a different turn, and became tragic.

George had been much interested in a book he had been reading about quadrupeds, with the accounts of the different accomplishments that might be taught to animals; and the result was, that he had made many attempts to teach a little tabby kitten, a plaything with all the children, but a special pet of Mary's, to walk upon her hind legs. He had hitherto met with no success; the kitten, he said, was a "stupid thing, and didn't understand." It was in vain Adela told him that cats could not be taught to walk on two legs instead of four, and that even with other animals it was the *result of great cruelty*. George, as has been al-

ready said, was very sturdy in his own opinions. "If bears, and dogs, and monkeys, could be taught to walk, why not cats? It was no reason, because no one had succeeded, that no one should succeed; perhaps they had never tried." So poor Muff was often victimised with her lessons, and had more than once been grateful to Adela for rescuing her from the paws of her ardent instructor. But George's self-will was still unconquered; and one afternoon, when Adela had gone into the village, leaving all the children at home, under promise of not getting into any mischief, he resolved on another attempt, which he said he was quite determined should be successful, and "Adela would see who was right." Henry was summoned to assist, and he was generally engaged in the same mischief as George, from love to his brother, and want of thought; otherwise he was the most amenable of the two. The dancing lesson, however, did not go on well, when George said he had thought of a plan by which Muff would find herself obliged to do what was wanted, and that it was no use to be obstinate.

They helped themselves to a piece of tape out of nurse's basket, whilst she was away ironing, and proceeded to fasten one end round Muff's throat with a running noose; the other end George passed round the bell of the dining-room, the scene of action, and by keeping it in his hand, Muff, to avoid *being strangled*, was obliged, whenever he

pulled it far enough, to stand on her hind legs; and George said, there was no doubt with practice she would soon be quite perfect.

But, alas! excited by the success which they thought themselves on the point of achieving, her instructors in their eagerness at last gave such a violent pull, that they raised their pupil from the ground, off even her hind legs, and she became suspended to the bell; the boys in their fright got the tape entangled, the slip-knot had quite tightened round her neck, and before they succeeded in cutting her down, poor Muff was dead.

Great was the consternation, joined in by the girls who had reached the spot. Mary and Louisa began to cry; but Charlotte, whose practical bump was strongly developed, remembered having been one day with Adela when nurse fainted, and flew at once to fetch the remedies she had seen her sister use. They were, however, quite unavailing, and when Adela returned, she found a disconsolate group seated in a circle, "viewing the body," which with the carpet around was thoroughly drenched with eau de Cologne and cold water.

A howl of grief arose from the party when she made her appearance; the girls were indignant and angry, George hot and irritated. Adela had forthwith to sit in judgment on the case; but had the most enlightened jury in England been there to give it the benefit of their united wisdom, they *must have acquitted* of any intent to murder, and

have brought in a verdict only of kitten slaughter. Henry was commissioned to carry away poor Muff's remains; the girls were after a time pacified; and George, to whom Adela pointed out seriously how much he had been to blame, was desired to go to his room, that he might reflect quietly on the suffering his self-will and sufficiency had caused an innocent creature.

Some degree of cheerfulness and happiness, however, was restored before they all met for tea, though it did not pass over quite undisturbed; for when Mary remembered how engagingly poor Muff had always begged for her milk, the idea that she should never see her do so again was too much for her, and her tears began to flow afresh. They were only calmed by Adela telling her she would get her another kitten, which would like milk quite as much as the old one, and should have just the same grey fur, and blue eyes. George promised that he would never torment it; and, moreover, that Muff should be buried under the oak tree, and should have an epitaph written to inform those it might concern, that "she had been accidentally murdered, and was deeply lamented."

"The singing bird" dried her tears, and listened with a smile to the new schemes, in which she became so deeply interested as to forget for a time her great trouble; and the first thing Adela saw *next morning in the garden* was, that George and

Henry were digging the hole as had been arranged. A large slate was to serve for the epitaph, of which a copy was first made on paper, and submitted to public opinion. Charlotte was the chief objector. As George had worded it, she said it would seem that the whole party had a hand in Muff's untimely end. Her sense of justice was very strong; it would be, she said, very unfair when they had had nothing to do in the matter. Adela suggested that it should only be said that the kitten had been accidentally killed, to the great sorrow of her friends, Charlotte, Louisa, George, Henry, and Mary Edgerton. "Was not Adela sorry too?" asked Mary. "Yes, Adela was sorry." So her name was put first among Muff's friends, and the composition having been scratched on a slate with a pair of old scissors, (a proceeding which Adela begged might take place out of her hearing), the whole of the little party went to secure it firmly over their favourite's remains. Adela watched the group from the window, as they stood under the old oak, and earnestly pondered on the responsibility of training each little mind aright. The whole party returned in good spirits; the girls having forgiven George in consideration of the feeling and talents he had displayed on the occasion, by which they had been quite won. Any one who could produce such an epitaph as that of Muff's, could not fail of becoming in time a real judge *with a wig and gown*, like Baron Stevens, whom

they had seen at the assizes held in the county town.

But it was clearer than ever to Adela, that the first step towards such dignity must be that George and Henry should go to school without delay, as they were getting daily more and more beyond her control. Fortunately, some other tricks, which came under their father's immediate notice, had the effect of hastening the event she so much desired, and made Mr Edgerton decide on placing the boys at school at once. He kept to this resolution, and in a few weeks they both left home to begin their new life. There was some grief at the separation, but the boys themselves were not sorry to go; and those who remained, consoled themselves with remembering the return for the vacation, to which they should look forward as a new pleasure.

The disturbing elements being thus removed, and provided for, Adela's life again became peaceful; holidays came, went, and returned, finding the young people growing out of mere children, and daily more and more companions to their sister; but here, as before, a few touches must suffice for the whole.

It was one of Adela's greatest blessings, that serious illness had hitherto been unknown among their party. The diseases of infancy had passed lightly over them, and the removal to the country had produced all the results that had been looked

for. Louisa was the only one who still shewed symptoms of delicacy, and sometimes caused Adela a little anxiety. She had always been tall of her age, and had outgrown Charlotte, who was a year older, but much more compact and sturdily built.

“Girls,” said Adela, one fine day in the summer, “if you will make haste and get ready, we will walk down to the ruined cottage by farmer Brook’s; you know I have always thought it would make a pretty sketch, and to-day is not too hot to walk, so fetch the things, and we will go at once.” They never desired anything better than to have a whole afternoon’s ramble like that proposed, and were ready before many minutes had elapsed. They divided the things between them, that no one might be too heavily laden, and the party set out, not suspecting how little use would be made of the implements they carried. Their road lay at first through green lanes, down which they wandered leisurely; but when they came to the open fields which lay between them and the old ruin, Mary proposed, as they got over the last stile, that they should have a race, and see who would reach it first. The other two, nothing backward, agreed, and off the three started, Louisa being the lightest, leading, and reaching the cottage first, where she sat down on the crumbling garden wall to rest. The house had been long deserted, and had reached its most picturesque point of decay. It could not fail of becoming soon a shapeless

heap, being unroofed, while on the old walls the vegetation had found a footing, and mantled the desolation with something like a smile; it stood upon the edge of a little coppice, which made a pretty background to the whole, and here the children proposed gathering wild flowers whilst Adela made her sketch.

As Louisa sat on the wall, her attention was attracted by a brilliant tuft of yellow flowers which grew above her head on the ruin, and eager to secure such a prize for her intended nosegay, she instantly began scrambling upwards, like a goat, over the tumbling stones, and, to Adela's alarm, soon appeared perched upon the summit, clasping in her hand the treasures she sought. Her sister, as soon as she was near enough, called to her to be careful, and come down at once. Louisa was willing to obey, but not to leave the flowers, the stalks of which were so tough, that, as she held a great handful, it required a violent pull to separate them from the plants. The effort loosened the roots, and threw Louisa off her balance, the stones under her gave way from the movement, and she fell among the rubbish beneath, with a portion of the displaced wall on top of her. Adela, who had by this time reached the spot, was by her side, but Louisa was incapable of moving from pain. The rolling stones had fallen upon her ankle, which had thus been crushed between them, and some of the bricks which lay scattered below, and it was



quite impossible for the girl to stand, or put her foot in any way to the ground. It was equally beyond Adela's strength to carry her, and she therefore despatched Charlotte at once for assistance, to the farm-house that was in sight. Farmer Brook was not at home, but his wife, as soon as she was told of the accident, sent one of the men who were about at work, with the garden chair in which old Mrs Brook, the grandmother, was always wheeled out, telling Charlotte to beg Miss Edgerton would bring the young lady who had been hurt to their house, where they would do all they could for her. The chair was a welcome sight to the party waiting at the cottage, and Adela felt most grateful to the stout labourer who was drawing it; but Louisa was so anxious to be taken home, that after lifting her carefully in, it seemed best to proceed there at once, without further stopping on the road. When the shoe and stocking were removed, the poor little foot was found too much bruised and swelled for Adela or the nurse to be able to tell the extent of the injury; but when the doctor, who had been sent for, arrived, he told them one of the ankle bones was broken, and that it was a bad accident, the care of which would be long and tedious. Having done all that was necessary, and banded the foot, he recommended Louisa should be carried to bed, and kept, for the present, as quiet as possible. The care bestowed, however, warded off the ill effects that might have followed the first

shock and pain, and in a few days they were able to carry her back to the drawing room, still pale and suffering, but delighted to find herself once more among the rest, though it was evident that she would be long a prisoner, and unable to walk.

If it is trying to any one to be thus crippled and laid aside, it must be doubly so to a child whose happiness much consists in being perpetually in motion. Louisa felt severely not being able to move, the more so that she was naturally of a temperament easily depressed by trouble; and Adela saw that she must not only be in common with the rest, a bodily care taker, but that it fell to her, who had the power, to be also a *spirit* nurse. It was evident a little judicious help would enable her young sister to struggle more successfully and easily with the trouble which had befallen her, and that she must not sit by to witness the failure in the trial, and then to blame the weakness before she gave the helping hand, which would make the victory easier, and save much of suffering. At the same time, care was necessary in the assistance rendered, not to make the object of it selfishly exacting to others, and inclined to do nothing to aid herself.

It is not every one who can be to the weak body and the struggling soul a *spirit* nurse; it is a peculiar quality, and many equal to the bodily requirements of nursing, have no idea of a further want; it requires not only the kindly feeling

“that looketh not on its own, but on the things of others.” There must be also a quick perception of the lights and shadows of small things, combined with a pliability of mind that can identify itself with, and enter into, a weaker mood in all kindness and patience, without its own greater energy being influenced or weakened by it. And to this must be united the tact to make the result only felt, without the spring being always visible; to arouse strength which may be sleeping, without the exciting cause being quite apparent; to soothe irritation it hardly knows how, and bring with a smile a half wonder whence the sunbeam came, and a pleasant conviction, that strength, and peace, and cheerfulness are not past for ever, if only the region where they dwell can be gained. To this also must be further added, a patient bearing and forbearing when success does not always accompany the efforts for good at once, a tarrying in gentleness for the healing of the mind as well as of the body, and when this appears at hand, a gradual and imperceptible withdrawal, not of the kindness but of the help, as the strength becomes equal to self-support; so that the credit of victory shall not be usurped by the strong, leaving the sufferer disheartened by a sense of failure, and therefore ill at ease with himself. Many a one who has been well nigh crushed in body and soul, has risen again to bless some *spirit* nurse.

This was what Adela now sought to be to her little sister. She shewed her how if some pleasures had been taken away, there were others which she could still enjoy, and taught her how to seize and use them, so as to make herself independent of always wanting attention from those around her. She made but little show of Louisa being now her foremost thought, perhaps the child herself never suspected it. But it was Adela who had her sofa placed in such a position at the window that she could see all the splendour of a setting sun, and then pointed out its beauties, till Louisa saw glory she had never observed before. It was Adela who, when she went out in her chair, walked beside her, and gathered all the wild flowers, telling her as they lay on her lap many curious things about them, shewing her when at home how beautiful they looked through the microscope, and how she could find their names in the book of botany; an employment of which she got so fond, that after every such expedition the lame girl's couch was covered with flowers of which she was busy hunting up the names. Mary and Charlotte used always to read in the room where she was, and the books never seemed to have been so interesting. She did not know that Adela had specially chosen them with a thought for her, or when, to Mary who was in tears over some childish sorrow, she pointed out how disappointment gives even children the opportunity

of shewing their love to God, by being cheerful when things do not happen as they like, that the words were meant to fall on other ears, and convey the lesson which Louisa laid to heart. She did not know when in the summer twilight her sisters gathered round her as she lay, and Adela's voice talked of so many and such pleasant things, that her heart was yearning with sympathy for the little invalid.

Nor did Louisa at all suspect that she had been particularly thought of, when, one day after the boys' holidays had begun, many eager voices ran to tell her the news, that "papa had got a carriage for Adela, and a beautiful grey pony, with a long tail, to draw it." How she longed for the time when it should be brought to the door that she might see it from the window, and how pleasant a surprise when, the very first day, Adela said she should take Louisa with her, to see if she liked her carriage as well as her own, and with Adela driving, and the other two tucked in behind, Louisa thought she had never been so happy since the day she hurt her ankle. She did not know that the carriage had been got, because Adela had perceived how wearisome the being dragged slowly about in the chair often was, though Louisa never complained, and how pale her cheek still continued for want of a little more briskness and change, all of which had made her represent the case to her father, who had provided the remedy by his pre-

sent to his eldest daughter. All through the summer they had many pleasant drives, though Louisa still often went out in her chair, which made it appear the greater treat when "Earl Grey,"—so they had named the pony,—carried them at a brisk trot further than she could be taken in her own conveyance.

And thus passed the summer, at the beginning of which Louisa thought she must be miserable; but though less suffering, she did not regain the use of her foot; and at the end of the autumn, her father took her to town for further advice. The opinion given, though on the whole holding out ultimate hope, was that the most essential point was absolute rest; and that everything depended on her not being allowed to use the ankle too soon. It was impossible, the surgeon told them, to say when she was likely to be able to walk, certainly not for many months, and it might be much longer. Louisa was, however, only told that she would have to remain quiet some time yet.

With the summer went many of her pleasures. She seldom got out, as it was too cold for either Earl Grey or the chair, and there were no flowers to be gathered for her botany. But still winter seemed to have brought more employments than usual. Adela had said she was now old enough to learn Italian. Her talent for languages had not escaped her sister's watchful eye, and she soon made progress enough to be able to do much to-

wards getting on by herself; she was a nice little workwoman too, and it was wonderful how many things were wanted which it was thought Louisa could make, and for which the materials were supplied. When the boys came home for Christmas, they had no end of stories to tell her, and Mr Edgerton often spent an hour talking to his little daughter.

Her music had to be given up as far as the piano was concerned, but Adela said there was nothing to prevent their singing. She sang sweetly herself, and taught Louisa and Mary, whose voice was as clear as a bell, all sorts of songs, both Scotch and English, besides many hymns. During the holidays they were joined by Henry, who had a taste for music; but George and Charlotte, who much resembled each other in many ways, were alike in having no ear, and in not being able to tell "Yankee Doodle" from "God save the Queen;" but it was no matter, Adela told them, they must learn to do something else, and it gave the others an audience; so the two were content to be silent, save when they laughingly set up for critics. Those singing choruses were good things for all. Many a gloomy thought took wing, many an irritated temper was smoothed down, many an evil spirit that had crept stealthily among the party round the warm hearth vanished, driven away by the magic of the sound; and to Adela nothing was more refreshing than the childish

voices, when often, without joining herself, she listened to the simple words, suited to their capacity, yet conveying ideas that nothing could go beyond. Certainly every one felt all the better when they had had some singing. The evil one does not love to linger within sound of the joy and thanksgiving that are in the dwellings of the righteous.

There were, besides, not wanting friends who had always been kind, and were now doubly so to Louisa, both for her own and her sister's sake. All who knew Adela loved and respected her, and she had long found among their neighbours, many who were more than mere acquaintances, and with whom she held pleasant and profitable intercourse. The returning spring found Louisa so much improved, that though not able to walk, she could bear to put her foot to the ground, and had leave to try it a little very carefully. As, however, she still looked delicate, and the confinement of so many months had been trying to her, they went for the summer to the sea-side, for it was thought all the party would benefit by the change. Earl Grey was taken, and a happy life they led. Adela said they had come for a holiday, and were going to have it; so although she was not a person who ever sanctioned perfect idleness, they lived almost entirely out of doors, walking, bathing, and driving. The boys, too, were charmed with the freedom of the life, particularly Henry, who had



always been very fond of the sea and shipping. He made great friends with the fishermen, who admired the lad's spirit, and sometimes took him out with them when they were to return soon. He had long said he should like to be a sailor, but this fancy received no encouragement from his father.

Before they returned for the winter to Redleigh, all the girls were as brown as berries. Louisa had got quite a healthy colour, and Adela's mind was relieved of the anxiety she had so long felt about her; though still able to do very little, and obliged to use a stick, it was become certain she would regain the use of her foot, and not, as they at one time feared, be a cripple. The sea air having had so large a share of the credit of her recovery, they returned the following summer, and resumed their pleasant out-of-door life. The girls were beginning to look quite tall now, no longer the little things of whom Adela had first taken charge; the two eldest were thirteen and fourteen, Mary ten, the boys came between; they were fast growing into companions, and their daily life gave token that the good seed sown would bring forth its fruit in due season.

They were sitting on the beach one day, when they saw an old woman making some pincushions, but she did not appear to make much progress; her old fingers were nearly past work.

"Adela," said Louisa, "I do not think poor

Goody Stitch gets on fast; and did you ever see anything so ugly?"

"She seems too old for her business, Louisa; I hope she does not depend upon her work for a livelihood. We will ask her."

The old woman, in answer to their inquiries, said she had been long in the habit of selling little trifles made by her granddaughter, and that they were often bought by the ladies who came down to the beach; but she added, "Sally was gone to service, and though she sent her some of her wages, she could not spare enough to keep her. She had sold all the things that remained in her basket, and was trying to make some more; though," said she, "ma'am, I was a rare worker when I was young, yet somehow old eyes and fingers don't help me much."

Charlotte forthwith inquired the price of the pincushion she was making, and being told twopence, informed Goody Stitch that she intended to buy it as soon as finished. "There were some others," the old woman said, "which were ready, and prettier too, for that matter, so that the young lady need not wait," saying which she displayed her store; but Charlotte would have none but the one in hand, because, as she afterwards privately informed Adela, "it was really so ugly, she was afraid if she did not take it, no one else would." They therefore sat down till the last stitch was put in, when, the twopence having been paid, they re-

turned home, Charlotte carrying her purchase; which she kept turning round and round with a disconsolate air.

"I do not know what to do with my beauty, Adela," said she; "I would give it to Nurse, only it is not fair to make a present of a thing because one doesn't like it."

"Well, but it will hold the pins just as well as a pretty one, will it not?"

"Oh, of course, only it *is* so terribly ugly, what *shall* I do with it?"

"The sight ought not to be so disagreeable, Charlotte, when you remember that it procured the old woman the means of getting some dinner; if you had any imagination, you would see instead of the ugly squares that disturb you so, fresh herrings and potatoes, all smoking hot, before Goody Stitch; but give it to me, I shall really be obliged for the present, as mine is nearly worn out."

"Oh I shall be so glad if you will take it," was the answer of the despairing owner; and Adela carried away her pincushion, which was valuable to her as a token of good which she might hope had taken root in the heart of one on whom she had bestowed a mother's care.

She saw that afternoon that there was something stirring among the girls, but she forbore asking, as she was sure to know in time; and at last the secret came out. They were going to set up Goody with a stock-in-trade that should eclipse all she

ever dreamed of, and bring endless purchasers to the market. Adela left it all to them, only giving advice when asked, and all the materials she could collect. At the end of a week, the old woman did not know how to be grateful enough for the pretty articles which filled her basket. They were soon sold, but the same hands made more, and the business became a settled thing with the young Edgertons.

"Goody's dress is very old, Charlotte," said Louisa, one day after an interview; "suppose you and I make her a new one. I've got money enough to buy the print, if you will help me to make it up; only how are bodies cut out?"

"I do not know," said Charlotte, "perhaps some one will shew us."

"Oh no," rejoined her sister, "it will be much pleasanter to make it all ourselves. We can look at one of Nurse's dresses; if you will make the skirt and one sleeve, I will try and do the body and the other sleeve."

The two agreed, and were soon at work. The undertaking was a great one. "But perhaps it would not signify about its fitting very well," said Charlotte; "Louisa has done the body quite cleverly." "Only," remarked Adela, when it was shewn to her, "how come the two sleeves to be of different lengths; has Goody one arm longer than the other?"

"Dear me, no," answered Charlotte; "Louisa, we must have made some mistake."

This was, on consideration, soon accounted for. In the hurry to get on, one of the young dress-makers had measured, without thought, by her own frock, instead of the pattern dress, which was not at hand; it served as an excellent text to Adela for a few hints concerning the old proverb, "More haste, worse speed." Another yard of chintz was bought, and the sleeves having been made alike, it would have been difficult to say the next week whether the amateur workwomen or Goody Stitch were the most pleased, when she appeared on the parade in her new attire.

In the mean time, Adela had many matters besides amusement to attend to: the boys' wardrobes always wanted setting to rights when they came home, and she had given some new shirts to be made for them to a young needlewoman who was highly recommended to her. Several things had prevented her going to pay for the work, but at last one morning, when looking over the clothes with nurse, she said, "Now really, to-day I will go as far as Mrs Wood's, and pay Susan for the shirts she has made."

For so it was; Adela was the "nice lady" to whom Mrs Wood meant to apply for help on Eleanor's behalf the next time she might chance to call.

Determined to carry out her resolution, she put on her bonnet in the cool of the evening, and bent

her steps towards the school. Miss Flyn had taken all the rest, or rather, they had taken Miss Flyn, on a rock expedition after sea-weed, so that she was alone. Mrs Wood saw her coming, and, meeting her at the door, asked her to walk into the children's room. Miss Edgerton paid her bill, and was told that Susan had not much time for work at present, having the whole school to attend to, now her mother had a lodger. Adela had not heard of the change. "And indeed, ma'am," said the good woman, "I was wishing you might come, for I thought perhaps you could help the young lady with some advice; she is ill, and lonely, Miss, and a stranger here, without any friends but myself, ma'am, if I may say as much. Indeed, Miss Edgerton, I think she would be glad of a visit from a lady like you." Mrs Wood had too much good feeling to reveal all she knew of Eleanor's affairs.

"If I could be of use, Mrs Wood, I should be most happy; but I am such a total stranger, it might seem like an intrusion."

"I think not, Miss, but I will ask." She soon returned, begging Miss Edgerton would follow her into the little sitting-room, and Adela did as requested.

Where had she seen some one before like the lady who rose on her entrance? Could it be? In that tiny cottage room, ill, and without friends? Yes, there was no mistaking,—though the face was

so thin and pale,—the tall figure and the dark eyes, and “Eleanor Harcourt” was all she could utter.

A similar exclamation of surprise had escaped Eleanor’s lips. Mrs Wood had mentioned no names, forgetting their ignorance of what she knew so well, and both were therefore alike unprepared for the surprise which awaited them.

“It is very curious,” thought Mrs Wood, closing the door, “that the two ladies seem to know each other.”

There were “stranger things than were dreamt of in her philosophy.”



## CHAPTER XI.

### Divided Paths Meet.

"The reason firm, the temperate will,  
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill,  
A perfect woman, nobly planned,  
To warn, to comfort, to command;  
And yet a spirit still, and bright  
With something of an angel light."

—WORDSWORTH.

THE evening shadows had stolen on, and twilight was settling over the grey sea, before the two friends were aware of the time they had spent in communicating and hearing the history of the past. Eleanor had heard of Mrs Edgerton's death, but not of the removal from town, and did not know that she had become of her old companion, who on her side was perfectly ignorant concerning Eleanor's

That it was a brilliant one she had never doubted. The increasing darkness warned Adela that she must return home, and she rose to depart, saying, as she did so,

"I shall come again to-morrow, Eleanor, and



we may now be so much together, that there will be abundant time to hear all that remains untold."

"But shall you have leisure, Adela?" It seemed to Eleanor that the life of which she had been hearing could only be passed in hard and constant work, and had conveyed to her mind an idea of excessive drudgery.

"Oh yes, I shall always be able to come and see you. I am not chained to my oar," added Adela merrily; "I am no galley slave, and have always time to cultivate my friends. You will not be lonely now, Eleanor, for all my children will want to come and see you when they hear of my adventure; and we shall bring Earl Grey to take you a drive, which I am sure will do you good. But really if I stay longer I shall be benighted, so good bye without one word more."

Eleanor stood at the little window watching the receding figure till it was no longer visible. It seemed like a dream, to have heard the old kindly voice again, and almost impossible to think of its returning; almost as if the good had come for a moment, and vanished for ever, with the form that was each minute becoming more and more indistinct. She was roused from her reverie by the entrance of Mrs Wood, who brought her some lights, and was also full of anxiety to be told, how and when the ladies had formerly been acquainted.

"To think now, Miss," said she, when Eleanor

had satisfied her curiosity by telling her Miss Edgerton was an old school-fellow; "to think how I was wishing for her to come, and you to be friends after all; and yet it ought not to surprise an old woman like me, to see the help sent to one who wanted it, just at the right time; and it is not every one who can be such a friend as Miss Edgerton. There are few young ladies or elderly ones either like her."

"And yet she has never been very rich, Mrs Wood, and has for years been looking after a set of children; how can she be able to do so much?"

"Well, Miss, I've always observed, that they who do most are those who can do more; and as to the riches, it isn't so much the money that she gives, though for that matter she always seems to have some to spare when really wanted. No, ma'am, it's not that, but a great deal more; it's a kind word here, and a bit of encouragement there, a little praise if it's deserved, or comfort if there's trouble, and advice so kindly given, no one can take offence. Why, though she is only here in the summer months, yet you'll hear many a poor family say, it was a happy day when they first saw Miss Edgerton; that it] was just like a sun-beam coming in at their dark door."

"Miss Edgerton seems to have no faults," replied Eleanor, her old spirit rising in her.

"Faults she has, Miss, like all of us, but it's hard to tell what they are, though indeed more

than once she's said to me, 'Mrs Wood, it makes one feel quite angry when people will go on without taking any heed to their real good; but it was always my fault to be too impatient;' so you see, Miss, it is not she who thinks herself perfect, though to hear her kind voice it's the last thing you'd suppose that she could ever have been impatient; but she is too humble a Christian, ma'am, not to have found out her own faults."

"And the children, Mrs Wood, what are they like?"

"A nice set, Miss, as you could see anywhere. I have heard that Mrs Edgerton was an uncommonly good lady, and I often think to see her children it must have been so; they are at the age for being a little wild with spirits, the young things, but it does one good to see, and they're already becoming like their sister. You have never been to the beach, ma'am, or you'd see the old woman that sells pincushions; she's past doing any work now, and it's the young Miss Edgertons who make all the pretty things that the ladies are glad to buy. The poor old body does not know how to say enough when she begins to talk of them; and well she may be grateful, for they have kept her from starving by their work all the summer. But I beg your pardon, Miss," added she, as an expression passed over Miss Harcourt's face which she did not understand, "you must be tired already with *so much more talking than usual, and not want*

any more of my stories ; so by your leave I'll shut the window, and draw the curtains at once."

Eleanor was once more alone with her thoughts. What was it that had curled her lips, and raised a half smile as she listened to the praise of the young Edgertons ? Simply that she found therein a proof of her old school-fellow being unchanged, since the day when she had given up her time to pack a little girl's trunk. "However, it is the kind of life that would suit her," said Eleanor to herself ; "she never could have managed anything greater, and she is teaching the children in just the same way, with no better object than making pincushions for an old woman." What were the greater aims that Eleanor considered Adela ought to have rushed out of her quiet sphere to accomplish, she did not define in her own mind ; "the great" was, and ever had been, to her an indefinite idea, of something which time would bring to light ; not the simple striving after the good, that presented itself to be wrought out, whether in high or humble paths. There arose, too, in her mind, notwithstanding her contempt for small things, a suspicion amounting to a disagreeable certainty, that with all the advantages she had, as she considered, enjoyed for so many years, she had not accomplished even the little that must be conceded to Adela. It was not a pleasant reflection ; it never is, to be obliged deliberately to bring in a *verdict against one's self* ; and Eleanor unconsciously

added so much vigour to her movements, that she snuffed her candle completely out. Annoyed and vexed, she took refuge in her room for the night, with a fixed determination to make no more comparisons, for had they not always been known to be odious things?

Adela also had much food for reflection during her walk homewards. She truly pitied the friend she had so unexpectedly found, and entered deeply into the sadness of the lot which was so forlorn. The desolation was what she could best understand; for what should she have done in such a case, who had always been surrounded with love? The only comfort was, that it would be in her power now to cheer and help her who had it to bear; yes, Eleanor, as she had said, would no more be quite lonely; it was evidently come before her as part of her work in life to see that she was not. Of what it must be to lose a fortune she could not form so good an idea; she had never had one, and had been mercifully shielded from all such startling reverses as that which had befallen Eleanor; but she could imagine how great the trial must be, and doubly bitter to a proud mind. There also arose from the reflection a serious consideration,—Eleanor had unfolded her scheme to Adela for obtaining pupils, and continuing to reside at Mrs Wood's, and had asked her aid in furtherance of the plan. She was willing to do *all in her power*, but felt the necessity of knowing

whether Eleanor was fitted for the task she wished to undertake. In intellect and accomplishments, there was no doubt of her proficiency; it was for the moral training of her charge that Adela felt the Eleanor Harcourt she knew of old would be unsuited. She could not recommend out of kindness to one party what was not desirable for the other; and she did not feel sanguine that the kind of life Eleanor had been leading was likely to have improved her on the doubtful point. She was glad to think, that as nothing could be done till Eleanor grew stronger, she should have time to satisfy her mind, and decide in what way she could render assistance without any sacrifice of conscience.

Eleanor's ill humour was considerably mollified with the return of the morning light; and, moreover, she felt ashamed of the littleness of mind she had given way to in thinking of one who had met her so kindly in trouble, and who, however much she might affect to despise her, she was obliged to confess to herself, had done more than she had ever thought of attempting; and she began to wish for the hour which should bring the object of her thoughts back again. She had time enough to wait to feel how much she looked forward to the meeting; for Adela did not, as Eleanor had thought likely, return early. She was much too consistent to fly to a new duty, leaving all former ones undone. Eleanor, she knew, did not require *such violent attentions*; she was not ill enough to

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need nothing of immediate attendance, and was for the moment well off. Adela therefore quietly went through her usual morning duties, which would thus enable her to devote the later hours to her father. She also wished to have a quiet talk with him, and when he was to leave them that morning, had not a short time, but it was also possible he might only join them at home six weeks later, and Adela had plans which required his sanction before he departed. Eleanor therefore spent the morning in expectation, and was beginning to feel that something was then in her interruption would be very pleasant when with her dinner at one o'clock she had brought a note which had just come. It was from Alice, to say that the boys were about for going out in the middle of day, and intended being early with the children, as her father was away, and should call for Eleanor to take a drive in the park of the evening, at which time which she proposed carrying a basket, and would take care to provide for

spirited of

first knew each other. It was a long story, and to the listener a very sad one; for she could make her own comment on it. There seemed to have been throughout so little peace or real happiness in the midst of worldly prosperity, that she never felt less inclined to envy a fate apparently more brilliant than her own.

"And were you ever really happy, Eleanor?" she asked.

"I was sometimes very happy, but it was when I gave myself no time to think; because when I did so, I always had an idea I might be doing more good in life than I ever did; and I always meant to begin and do right some day, but the time slipped away, and now I am not able to do anything. Adela, do you know I believe I was not worthy to have much to answer for any longer. Is there not something in the Bible about riches having wings?"

"Yes; it is Solomon who says they 'certainly make themselves wings and fly away as an eagle towards heaven.'"

"That is just what mine did, in one sense at least, and I must say I am sorry I did not make a better use of them. One thing is, that now I have got nothing, I have nothing to be answerable for."

"But, my dear Eleanor, you surely are not in earnest. Every one is responsible for something, if only for their own actions; remember one talent



even must be turned to account, and you can hardly venture to say you have none."

"We shall see; perhaps I may be able to learn from you. I must not be above instruction now, having to take up a new line of business; but what a different life to mine yours has been."

"It has indeed, and it was very fortunate, for I should have been sadly wearied with all the gay doings you describe, and have had many more temptations to struggle with. I should have been as much out of my element as you would have found yourself in my life, which has been so quiet and"—busy, she was going to say, but the fear of appearing to praise herself made her hesitate, and she ended with "domestic" instead.

"You might have finished your sentence, Adela, if you were going to say useful. I would not take one sprig out of your crown, though without any myself."

"Perhaps you feel no temptation; my humble deeds could never lay claim to the laurels and bays of your ambition."

"Not a twig of which is planted, and what is my greatest vexation, with no chance of sprouting now. In a school-room nothing is supposed to shoot but the young ideas; oh dear Adela, I am sure I shall be bored to death."

"I do not know, perhaps not; you are far from strong yet, and things always appear worse when we are weak. Now I am going to turn Earl Grey's

head up some of the green lanes that lead from the sea, and we will take a nice country round to get home."

"It will be very pleasant, but Adela, pray do not think me very wicked when I tell you, my greatest wish at present is that I may never see that woman again."

"Who are you speaking of?" asked her companion, astonished at the tone in which the last words had been pronounced; and looking round she caught one of the volcanic flashes which at times darted from Eleanor's countenance. It revealed to her how the old spirit was only smothered, and slumbered, smouldering underneath the force of circumstances with its ancient fierceness.

"Who do I mean?" retorted Eleanor, who was getting angry at her own thoughts; "who could I mean, but Mrs Harcourt?"

"I am afraid I must think you very wicked, or shall I instead believe that you forgot many things when you spoke?"

"But I can't forget how she treated me; all her double dealings, deceit of which I have not told you, and how I might have died as far as she was concerned, before she would have come near me; and how when I was ruined by her husband, she turned me out into the world, ill, and without a friend, for all she cared; no, I have not forgotten, I only remember too well.

"It was very wrong, Eleanor, and not to be

excused ; but Mrs Harcourt is answerable for her sins, not you ; and as your memory is so good, why not also call to mind that there were times when she shewed you kindness, and that her trouble is scarcely less than your own ; nay, it is more, she has lost her husband as well as her money, which she valued so much, and has little in herself to make up for the loss of either. Her very want of strength of mind, whence arose her neglect of you in your illness, was a reason for pitying her ; and, indeed, we need only to remember our daily prayer, to be forgiven even as we forgive." It was her daily prayer, she did not suspect it might be otherwise with her companion.

"I believe, Adela, you would find excuses for any one ; but still it would be very hard for me to speak to her, even if we met ; I do not think I could do it."

"Well, you might have to do so, and even more ; but you are not called upon to run immediately in search of a person who has not treated you well ; and doubtless," she added, laughing, to try and give the conversation a gentler turn, "she would be still afraid of infection, so you can rest quietly, as at present it is no part of your duty to go near her, only to think of her as gently and charitably as you can."

"I must try ; but how much I have to learn." It was the most hopeful thing Adela had heard her say, though she felt little able to instruct such a

turbulent spirit; but she remembered, when disposed to blame, how severely Eleanor had been tried; and she was, as her friend said, a good hand at finding out excuses for others. They drove in silence for some way, when Eleanor said,

“I do not wonder, Adela, that you and Mrs Wood are such good friends; did she ever tell you her history?”

“Parts only, but enough to shew me she had narrowly escaped being a most unhappy woman. She and her husband seem to have begun life on the same principle as the gentleman who advertised that, ‘he was kind if kindly treated.’ I suspect it is a mode of acting very generally followed, though few would be as candid in confessing the selfishness of the main-spring.”

“It was most fortunate for Mrs Wood that she had a friend to set matters straight.”

“Yes, and one who could do it both kindly and judiciously. But we shall soon be at home now, and I hope you are bringing in a good appetite for substantial tea, and will be able to bear our number to which you have not been accustomed lately; but the boys are at school, and I have warned the girls they must have great consideration for your head, as you have been very ill. I assure you they are full of sympathy, ready to be your obedient servants, and to prove it by not talking too much.”

“I am sure I shall enjoy it wonderfully, so do

not fear. I feel better already for having been allowed to talk to you, instead of being not able to open my lips about what I was incessantly thinking of; you have been a perfect safety valve, Adela. I am not sure whether I shall not vote you a crown after all for your services to-night; a civic one you know."

"Well, thank you, that was honourable."

"Oh yes, highly so, for saving life, and I believe you will nearly have done as much for me; it has been such a relief to have an ear that could listen kindly. Here we are just at home, and I have not asked you one most particular question: will you, dear Adela, tell me exactly how you manage to make your children so good? Because I am so ignorant, I shall not know how to begin unless you would teach me; and there is no time to lose, for do you know I feel quite strong to-night, and must very soon set to work."

"You shall see first," said Adela laughing, "if you think they *are* good; opinions differ so much, and you do not know them yet."

"No, but I have already heard that they are so, and what I want to learn, is how you set about it?"

"It would be difficult to tell you, Eleanor, and might seem both dictatorial, and like praising myself, did I try; but I hope you will come, and pay us a long visit, and then you can see our ways of going on, and satisfy yourself as to the nature of the beings. I think you will be quieter in your

little lodging at present than in our house, so do not propose your leaving it whilst we remain here, because I can come and drive you out every day when it is fine, and you will be able to see as much or as little of us as you like. But when we go home to Redleigh, the end of October, papa has told me I must not fail to bring you with us; that is, of course, supposing you are willing to come. He charged me to say so, and the longer I could keep you the better; you will be getting quite strong then, and I hope will not refuse my request. But one thing, dear Eleanor," she added simply, "I can tell you about my children, which may account for much good, their infancy had that potent charm, a mother's prayers, and it has always been a source of happiness to me, that they were old enough to remember her, if not fully to appreciate the worth of her character."

The thought of old days always worked like a hushing spell upon Adela, which was the case now, and they spoke no more, save when Eleanor expressed her sense of the kindness extended to her. Many bright faces were looking eagerly for their return, and as they stopped at the door, they were greeted by a merry voice: "Oh, Adela, where have you been? Earl Grey cannot have gone half as well as usual, or you would have been at home much sooner."

It was long since Eleanor had spent so pleasant an evening. She forgot for a time all her past

bles and her present loneliness, and much of old liveliness returned. It was a beautiful ner night, and when they at last thought of going home, she felt quite equal to the , and nurse was sent to take care of her, lest should have over-rated her returning strength.



## CHAPTER XII.

### A Cold World and Warm Hearts.

"Friendship maketh indeed a fair day in the affections from storm and tempest, but it maketh daylight in the understanding, out of darkness and confusion of thoughts."

"Certain it is that whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do break up and clarify in the communicating with another. He tosseth his thoughts more easily, he marshalleth them more orderly. He seeth how they look when they are turned into words."—BACON.

FROM that day, desolation was past for Eleanor. She usually spent her mornings quietly in her little room, which was good for both mind and body; but in the afternoon Adela was sure to come and take her out. Sometimes she brought one of the girls, oftenest Louisa, to rest her ankle; at other times she came alone, that they might talk over subjects to which the children's presence would have been a restraint. She was generally taken home, and it became quite a settled thing that she should spend the evenings at Mr Edgerton's house.

*The effects were soon visible in the brightness*



that returned to Eleanor's eye, and the slight colour that was beginning to tinge her cheek, which had so long been of a deadly paleness. It did Adela's heart good to see the improvement each week was making in her friend's health and spirits, and Eleanor began to look even hopefully forward, to the time when she was to depend on her own exertions. If ever her courage failed, she kept it to herself, as she had so often done before; and if there was much that required alteration, of which she was not aware, Adela was content to wait the work of time, without either casting her down by doubt, or irritating her by constant endeavours to set her right all at once. One of Adela Edgerton's great charms was, that she never dogmatised, or assumed the right to oblige others to think like herself; however much she held to her opinions, or might wish they could see what was for their good, she was as far as possible from playing the part of "Sir Oracle," and had a quick perception of when it was better to let alone than to interfere. There was in her no desire to govern, save where it was her duty, and, therefore, whilst quietly going on her own path, although always ready to give her reasons if asked (and she never acted without them), she did not run them abruptly in her neighbour's way. It was the best possible influence for Eleanor in her present mood; had she been roughly treated, and allowed to perceive it was thought that she was extremely defi-

cient in essentials, she would have resented it with her old haughtiness; as it was, no one attempted to ruffle her in any way, and she was often won by the insensible effects of gentleness to lay down her pride for a time at Adela's feet, who betrayed nothing but sympathy for what she had suffered, joining to it a conviction in her own mind that all would be found at last to have worked exceeding good.

The last week in October was the signal for the Edgertons' return home. Adela came one morning earlier than usual to tell Eleanor that the day was fixed, and that she hoped she was sufficiently recovered to accompany them as had been proposed. "We have set our hearts on your spending Christmas and New Year's day with us," said she. "By the end of January we may expect you to be quite strong, and we will then do our best to forward your plans; at present we want you to be one of us, though of course you will be at liberty to go if you find us too disagreeable; for you must have seen we are very sober, plodding people, to what you have been accustomed to, and may possibly think, too stupid to be endured."

"If you say so, Adela, I shall believe you think me ungrateful for all your kindness. I shall, of course, be delighted to come; but though I should not have thought it possible two months ago, I positively feel sorry to leave my tiny lodging and good Mrs Wood."

"I can quite understand it; but it gives me the more hope that you may find the quiet of Redleigh endurable. Well, remember you must wind up your affairs, and be ready to start the day after to-morrow; we shall meet again before that, but it seemed better to give you a little notice."

Eleanor's preparations did not take very long to make. She had found out the history of the little sofa, and insisted, when settling with Mrs Wood, on paying for it; but meeting with a decided refusal, determined on sending the money direct to Mrs Timms. This she did the next day, with a long letter to the good housekeeper, telling her of all that had happened since they parted. Mrs Wood was to keep the sofa till she could have it sent to her, in case she did not come back. The charge for the two rooms was very low, and her living had not cost her much, so that when Mrs Wood had received what she considered abundant for her services, there was but little taken from Eleanor's purse, and enough remained to make her feel secure on that score for some time. She still purposed returning before long to her old quarters to begin her new plans; and it was no little recommendation to them that she might often see Adela in the summer. This was at present the rainbow in Eleanor's clouds. The parting between the young Edgertons' and Goody Stitch was very pathetic, as the old woman hardly knew how she should get on at all without them, though indeed

she had not the same sale for her things in the winter as during the summer. Adela, however, made arrangements which would ensure her from starving; and the girls promised faithfully to send fresh supplies for the basket, so that Goody had her rainbow as well as others.

Every one's business being happily settled, nothing remained but to depart. There was no railroad in those days which could take them to Redleigh, so that they had to make two parties; Miss Flyn, two girls, and nurse, went one day, and Adela, with Eleanor and Louisa followed the next. On the evening of the second day, they found themselves once more all together at home. Mr Edgerton, who had returned a week before, did not come from town to dinner, but arrived later in the evening. Eleanor had felt a little dread at the idea of meeting him for the first time; but it was soon dispelled by the kindness with which he responded to his daughter's introduction when he appeared in the drawing-room.

"You are welcome, Miss Harcourt—any friend of Adela's is; and as she has not got sisters enough, and wishes for an elder one, to which vacant post she tells me she has appointed you, why, all I have to say is, the sooner you can feel like it the better we shall all be pleased; there is room at Redleigh for another daughter, we have never yet found ourselves too many." Eleanor had no power to answer the words which accom-

panied the kindly pressure of the hand which held that of the lonely orphan girl.

"Well, Adela, have I said what I ought? I was never able to make graceful speeches to ladies, Miss Harcourt; to a judge on the bench, habit might render it easier; but I depend on my deputy there for supplying my omissions. Adela must say anything I have left out, she always knows what I mean."

His daughter looked gratefully at the speaker, and the tears stood in her eyes, though she answered playfully, "There is still something to be added, papa, and in virtue of my authority to speak, I shall further say how much obliged you will feel by Miss Harcourt's allowing you to take immediate possession of your arm-chair, bury yourself in your newspaper, and finally fall fast asleep, and even snore, she all the while being kind enough to express no surprise. I assure you, Eleanor, it is a habit that has become second nature; and my father's paper only requires a red tape tie to enable him to sit each evening for a likeness, as the personification of routine. Have I not rightly interpreted your sentiments, sir, and fulfilled the trust reposed in me?"

"Hem, I don't know, not very flattering; rather like an account of an old bear settling himself down into winter quarters. Suppose I say I could not think of such a thing?"

"Indeed, sir," said Eleanor, "the best way to

make me feel like your daughter, as you so kindly wished, will be not to mind me."

"Then I shall begin at once, Miss Harcourt, having so good a reason; and what can I do against the force of circumstances? I can only assure you, when you like to try, you shall find Bruin sleeps with one ear open." And Mr Edgerton took possession of his easy-chair with a laugh, in which all the party joined. His daughter's prophecies were speedily fulfilled, and the rest made themselves merry without disturbing him.

The family life at Redleigh was quite a new thing to Eleanor, she knew well enough what company was, and gaiety in every form was familiar to her, but her experiences contained nothing of a home circle, or of the quiet society of the good and true; and it was this she was now thrown into. Those whom she met at Mr Edgerton's were intellectual enough for her not to despise them, conformed sufficiently to the usages of others not to be remarkable, or open to her ridicule, and had that in them which commanded her respect, and gave her no opening for setting herself above them; nay, more, she began to suspect an inferiority on her part, though not quite certain in what it consisted. She could not but perceive a hidden life of which she knew nothing, which influenced their outward actions; and though afraid of trusting herself to the current, lest it should carry her, she knew not whither,

yet Eleanor had at one time enjoyed teaching which enabled her to know, that if the stream was deep, its waters and its source were pure. Among those whom she saw most frequently was the clergyman of the parish, Mr Hervey, who was universally beloved and respected by his parishioners; the wealthy and the poor alike rejoiced whenever he came among them. Mr Hervey had been much interested in Miss Harcourt's history, and frequently drew her into conversation. He always came alone, though a married man, and she sometimes wondered why his wife never accompanied him; but it seemed to cause no surprise to others, and she had never heard any reason assigned.

Many, too, were the quiet hours spent with Adela in talking of the past, the present, and the future. To the inquiries respecting her brother, Eleanor was able to say little more than what appeared in the usual monthly missionary journals. Since they had become so divided in heart, his letters never entered much into his own feelings or the minutiae of his work; and the bare statements of the movements from one station to another all the world heard of as much as she did. She had never had any idea of what had passed between her brother and her friend, and did not know when dwelling on her kindness, in the letters now written from Redleigh, that the subject would have more than common interest for him; there

had not been time to get any answer to her letter sent at the period of all her trouble. He had only occasionally mentioned Edward Vernon, and Adela, through her constant reading of the missionary records, knew much the most of his proceedings, and that he was one of those hoping against hope, and labouring with little apparent success, but in a more healthy climate than had fallen to the lot of his friend. Adela had kept up a deep interest in their work, and at the annual missionary sermon preached at Redleigh, her contribution was always liberal, though she was an annual subscriber as well. The collection had taken place when Eleanor had been but a few weeks with the Edgertons, and the amount of Adela's donation, which did not escape her notice, had excited her surprise. She could not help saying later in the day, "Adela, I do not know how it is you contrive to have so much to give away. I had for many years a much larger allowance than most young ladies, and yet there never was anything to spare; to be sure dress in London is very expensive."

Adela blushed; she had not suspected her contribution had been observed by any one, but she answered readily—

"It is by a very simple process, Eleanor; for some time I went on the same plan as you, giving what I could spare, and often when the time came it was nothing at all."



"Yes, that was just what I found ; I always meant to give a good deal, only there was never anything left at the right time."

"I was very young," continued Adela, "when I was making the experiment. Dear mamma was alive, and one day that I was sorry I had not a shilling to give for something, she shewed me how much better it would be to settle carefully how much I could afford to give away, and put it by at once, not to be touched except for charity ; as in fact no longer belonging to myself."

"And did you do so?"

"Yes, from that day I tried her plan, and have always followed it. It is much better than leaving our alms-giving to the chance of much or little to spare ; it gives a regular settled purse to apply to for such objects, and need not prevent our giving more if we find we have still something left."

"But surely you must often feel the want of that money thus put by."

"I never have, though I thought like you at first that it would be an act requiring great self-denial. I do not say it does not call for some sacrifice, but one's gifts would be scarcely an offering of love without ; and one thing has often struck me, I never seem to miss the money."

"I must try the plan, if ever I have anything to give away again, which remains to be seen."

"You will never repent it ; and if ever so little

we know it is the spirit, not the value of the gift, which is weighed."

"I do not know why, Adela, but it always does me good to talk to you."

"Then pray do so whenever you feel inclined, though at this minute I believe I must be busy elsewhere; but now we are together, there will be time to say all we wish."

"If you ought to go, I must not keep you, only I wanted to ask if you did not like Mr Hervey's sermon?"

"Yes, it was very much to the purpose, which Mr Hervey always is; he never wastes words on useless arguments, merely to fill up time."

"That struck me to-day, and I thought John would have liked what he said. Why do we never see Mrs Hervey? I have often meant to ask you."

"She is not strong, and cannot go out in the evening, so she stays at home with her baby."

"What sort of woman is she?"

"A nice person; one who perhaps alone might not have had energy to shape out work for herself, married to Mr Hervey she makes a good wife, an excellent mother, and a kind friend to the poor; but she stays very much at home."

"Then you do not often see her."

"Yes, when I go there, which I frequently do, and sit an hour with her; but I did not take you, fearing you might think such a visit dull."

"No, I should not, and next time I hope you will take me."

"Certainly; but my girls are waiting, so I know you will let me tell you more another time."

The month of December brought a great many things with it; it brought the boys from school, good and merry; it brought Christmas, and also very heavy snow, that fell fast and thick, and lay upon the ground for many weeks.

But it did not put any one out of spirits; they were all well, and even Eleanor was strong enough to enjoy the winter's walk at noon, to watch the boys' slides and snow-balls, and the younger girls race round the garden, and laughingly defy good-natured Miss Flyn to catch them if she could. Their long evenings were particularly comfortable; every one was busy, brisk, and cheerful, and all were, or tried to be, good-tempered. If any one seemed to be freezing up into ill-humour with the weather outside, the genial atmosphere around soon thawed the unkindliness of spirit; but these moods were of rare occurrence where all strove, in Christian love, to bear and forbear, and anything of the kind seemed to grieve the whole party for a time. Goody Stitch's stock got on famously during these winter evenings, and the rivalry of pincushions and needle-books, kettle-holders, and markers, was great.

"I can't make it out, Adela, in the least," said Eleanor one day; "I was sure when I came to be

always with you, I shall understand what were your rules for managing every one, and I have hardly found out any yet, though I have been here two months."

"We have not many," answered her friend smiling; "and as they were for the most part made when the children were young, they have become so accustomed to them that they are almost habits more than anything else; though you might, if always in the school-room, occasionally find Miss Flyn or myself personating Lycurgus, or Solon at least. But at best, I believe we are very deficient in that point, and shall be thought by many terribly behind hand in stringent codes. The fact is we have always tried to instil principles instead of orders, and to turn out individual characters, not simply well-working machines."

The system was a new one to Eleanor.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### *A Wanderer in the Snow.*

"It is the mynd that maketh good and ill,  
That maketh wretch or happy, rich or poor ;  
For some that hath abundance at his will,  
Hath not enough, but wants in greater store,  
And other that hath little asks no more,  
But in that little is both rich and wise,  
For wisdom is most riches ; fooles therefore  
They are which fortune do by vowes devise,  
Sith each unto himself his life may fortunize."

—FAIRIE QUEENE.

THE snow which had fallen at Christmas did not melt with the new year ; it still lay frozen hard over gardens and fields. But the winter, though severe, was doing good to many, among them to Eleanor Harcourt, whose step was becoming as light, and her cheek as blooming as in old days ; and she now frequently reminded Adela that she was strong enough to exert herself. Returning one day from a brisk walk which had given a glow to her whole frame, she found, on entering the drawing-room, that Mr Hervey was there. He

appeared to have been paying a long visit, and was preparing to take his leave, which, after a few words to Eleanor, he did, saying as he shook hands with Adela, "I shall leave the business entirely to you."

Eleanor was not one to inquire into matters in which she was not concerned; but her curiosity, if she felt any, was destined soon to be relieved by Adela saying, as the door closed,

"Mr Hervey's business, Eleanor, relates to you; and if you will put off your bonnet, and come and sit cosily by the fire, you shall hear all about it."

"I do not think," she resumed when they were comfortably settled, "that you have ever heard us speak of Mr Hervey's mother; she is an elderly lady, getting into years, and as she lives alone wants a companion. Mr Hervey came here to-day to ask me if I thought you might like to go in that capacity?"

"And where does old Mrs Hervey live?"

"Near Hastings; she is very well off, and has a nice house standing in pretty grounds, a short distance out of the town. I think the name of the place is 'Holly Lodge.'"

"Holly Lodge; no laurels again. Adela, I think I had better not go."

"Why not? the determination is rather a hasty one."

"I'm afraid of the prickles, and of the old lady too; you know the only old woman I have ever

seen much of, besides your friend Goody, are Mrs Wood and Mrs Timms. I think somehow there can have been no grandmothers in our family, for I do not remember one; and never having lived in the house with an old lady, I have only an indistinct idea in which all sorts of fancies and bad temper mingle together. Are they not the distinguishing marks of the race?"

"It is well the old ladies of England do not hear you, Eleanor. If there are such, I can tell you Mrs Hervey is not one of them; she has been more than once staying at the rectory, so I can describe her. She is a tall woman, with the remains of great beauty even now; but she is sixty-eight, and does not affect youth. She became a widow about four years ago, since which time she wears nice black silk dresses, and her own grey hair braided under fresh well made caps. Young Mrs Hervey is, I know, very fond of her."

"That is a pleasant portrait; but it must be very tiresome perpetually to have to study the humour of an old lady."

"It may often be so; and if you go, it will of course be part of your duty to accommodate yourself to her wishes. I believe, from what I have heard, Mrs Hervey is very particular, and even sometimes a little exacting and unreasonable. You see I am not hiding anything from you, yet it will be well to reflect before refusing the offer."

Adela, in fact, felt more convinced than ever

that Eleanor was not fitted for the charge of children yet a while, and that it was very desirable her work should begin where she would have only herself to manage, which was more than she could do at present; all now asked of her was to conform to another person's wishes.

"You know, dear Eleanor," she continued, receiving no answer, "I am not proposing the thing because we want to get rid of you. I shall be sorry when the day comes for us to part, though we shall still not lose sight of each other. This must be always, as papa told you, your home now, and you my sister; and we should only be too glad to keep you altogether, if it were not for the pride of independence which makes you long to be up and doing, and into which I can quite enter."

"You are right, Adela; and as I must bear something to keep my independence, why not try Holly Lodge? Only promise you will not again think, after all Redleigh has been to me, that I could attribute anything but kindness to your words."

"I will not, I do not; and if I seem to press the scheme warmly, it is because if you will go, it seems to offer more advantages, and fewer drawbacks, than any other I know of. Mrs Hervey is a good woman, and on the whole not at all unkindly; she sometimes comes to her son's, and then you could often be at home,"—there was an emphasis on the word. "And there is one con-



sideration I have not named, Mrs Hervey is liberal in money matters, and wishes very particularly to have a lady for her companion, so she will pay accordingly."

"Yes, I must consider that now; and I see it will be decidedly best for me to try. It was very kind of Mr Hervey, too, to think of me, and I need only try after all." But Adela shook her head.

"I do not think that it would be of much use, or indeed fair upon the old lady, to fidget her by going, and coming away again directly; no, I should hardly recommend your trying at all, unless you would promise me not to be easily disheartened, but to give everything a fair trial, say of a year; unless, indeed, Mrs Hervey wished you to go, which I hope would not be the case."

"A year; it is a long time, Adela."

"Not very long, it soon passes; but you need not quite decide now; Mr Hervey will wait a day, I have no doubt, for your answer, and meanwhile you can think the matter quietly over in your own mind."

Eleanor did so, and had too much good sense not to perceive she had better accept the offer. The next morning Adela was empowered to signify her acceptance, and to beg Mr Hervey would write to his mother, proposing Miss Harcourt as the companion she sought. An answer was soon received from Mrs Hervey, who expressed herself *satisfied, and willing* to offer the young lady for

her services a hundred a year, and every comfort her house could afford. There was no doubt of the liberality of the terms, and Mr Hervey only hesitated on one point: his mother was very anxious Miss Harcourt should set out for Holly Lodge without delay, and it was but inclement weather in which to propose so long a journey. It would have been more considerate to have waited till the severe frost broke a little; but the truth was the depth of winter was the time when Mrs Hervey was dullest alone. Her son expressed his hesitation as he read this part of the letter, and even proposed writing to her on the subject. But Eleanor was determined to do nothing which should look like flinching.

“Pray do not, Mr Hervey; I must not mind such things now, and can be ready to set out in a few days, the weather may be milder even by that time; and at the worst, I am much better provided with wraps than most young ladies seeking a place. At one time that we drove very much in an open carriage in cold weather, I was obliged to have an abundance of them, so they will be just what I want now.”

It was therefore arranged that in about a week Eleanor should leave Redleigh, and letters were written to prepare Mrs Hervey for her coming. Adela had, when first the plan was proposed, reminded Mr Hervey of Eleanor's past history, and how little training she had had in giving up her

will to others, or in adapting herself to anything but her own fancies. She had done it to get him to beg for Mrs Hervey's forbearance at first, should any little annoyances arise; being as anxious that she should not be too severe at the outset, as that Eleanor should not hastily determine on not bearing anything that might be disagreeable. It was, however, painful when the matter was quite settled, to see her evident disquietude. She spoke little on the subject; but Adela marked how she sat with her work or her book before her for an hour together, without either doing a stitch or reading a word; and then she would hastily lay all aside, and putting on her bonnet, go out alone, walking as fast as her strength would allow her, till mere bodily exhaustion drove her in again. It seemed as if there was no other way of quieting herself but excessive fatigue, which obliged her for a time to rest from necessity.

"Eleanor," said her friend one day, and the person she addressed awoke with a start from one of her reveries, "we have not talked much after all about this plan for your going, and I think, if you repent of it, as I sometimes suspect, it would be better to give it up, and stay here till we hear of something you like better."

"No, I thank you, I shall go, there is nothing I am likely to like better; but you would be shocked if you knew all I think about it, and yet you would pity me. I don't know sometimes what will

happen to me, and believe I shall become one of the bad spirits that wander to and fro without any rest. Adela, what would I not give for your peace and quietness."

"I have never been tried like you, dear, but I wish I could give you what you require, for it must be terrible to feel as you describe."

"It is," said Eleanor pressing her hand to her heart; "I have often thought it could not go on, and wished I had never recovered; and yet if I had died! Oh, Adela, how ungrateful and wicked I am."

"But if you really feel so, you know all may be forgiven, Eleanor; if you seek aright, you will find comfort."

"I want it, and the rest that you seem always enjoying. I wish one could be happy by following a recipe just as one has for other things."

"So you may; and that reminds me I have one which I will give you; it is specially 'to give the weary rest;' is not that what you wish for?"

"It is indeed; is it in an old book? I long to see, and will follow it quite exactly. I only hope it is infallible, for nothing less will do in my case."

"It has never been known to fail when honestly tried, though it is not long; for which reason the only condition I make is, that you will learn it by heart. I am so sure of its doing you good, that I *want* you to know it perfectly. There are many

others of the same kind in the book, which is not a new one, and I will not forget to have it in readiness against the day of your departure."

This time was now drawing very near; the day before, Eleanor had the pleasure of getting letters from her brother, in answer to those written after Mr Harcourt's death. They were full of the tenderest affection and concern for her troubles. He would, he said, ask her to come to him, but the climate was bad, and the life not one she would like; but he would gladly spare what would put her above the fear of want, though she would not be the rich lady he had left her. He sent at the same time an order on his bankers, with a promise of its being regularly repeated at stated times. Eleanor felt real pleasure as she read the letter; she was not quite forlorn while she had a brother, who though distant loved her still. It was the affection she prized, for she rejoiced that now she was able to write and tell him, she should not be obliged to burden his means, which were not large. He had, when he wrote, not received the letter telling him of her being at Redleigh, surrounded by so much kindness; and now she could further say she was amply provided for at present, if only she proved able to remain with Mrs Hervey. She longed to sit down and communicate it all instantly, but there would be time before the next mail to write from Holly Lodge, which would be better, and she therefore deferred it; but the sad-

ness of her last day was much brightened by the letter she had received.

There had been no change in the weather, and the morning for her journey was intensely cold, with the snow deep on the ground. She was to travel alone, for Mr Hervey, who had much wished to accompany her, was detained at home by the illness of one of his parishioners. It was now, however, not her first journey unattended.

"I shall not be cold, Adela," said she, as the latter entered her room, where she was just finishing packing, and was preparing to put on her bonnet. "Look, I have a cloak all trimmed with fur to wear, and another lined with it to put round me, and keep my feet warm. I might go safely to Siberia, instead of Hastings;" and she laughed; she was anxious not to shew all she felt.

"They are beautiful, Eleanor, still I am glad your journey is something short of the Arctic regions. But stay, before you shut your box I must put in the book I promised you with the recipe. I have laid a marker in the place, and there is a pencil line against the one I mean; but there are many others you will find for yourself;" and she proceeded to pack carefully at the top of the trunk a small book, which was nicely done up in paper. Adela was always very neat.

"Thank you; now I am quite ready to set out, and here comes good Mr Hervey up the garden to say good bye! How kind! I have put

Edward's letter here," said she, opening her cloak, and shewing it tucked into the body of her dress, "and it seems to keep me quite warm; but dear Adela, what shall I say to you?"



## CHAPTER XIV.

### Introduces an Old Lady and her Dog.

"He could not fiddle, but yet he could make a small town a great city."

—BACON.

THE 18th of January. Holly Lodge is in its winter garb; the shining green leaves of the old trees which have given its name glisten in the snow. The robin on one of the boughs has a breast as red as the berries with which they are loaded; it is bitterly cold, but he got his breakfast this morning from the windows of the house near which he has his home. The sun is shining brightly enough to melt some of the fairy crystals round him, and he is feeling very comfortable; so he ruffles out his feathers, and repays his benefactress with his clear and cheerful winter song.

The mistress of Holly Lodge sits by her fire, and reflects on the events the day is to bring forth; she expects her companion before night, and the good lady draws from her ample pocket a letter,



bearing the Redleigh post mark. She will see again what Alfred says. Look at her while she reads. She has sat for her likeness before, and it was a true portrait. We recognise the rich black silk dress, and the nice fresh-looking cap, under which the grey hair is parted over a high and intellectual forehead; there is a keen look in the eyes, and the lines of the mouth denote great determination; all the features are regular, and there are relics of the good looks of which we have heard. The lady before us has been a beauty in her day, and an heiress to boot, in the stately days of beauty, when it never went abroad without its hoop and high-heeled shoes, its powder and its fans; her white hand and bright eyes were a frequent toast before she married, and it had been often said that Admiral Hervey's wife was "the handsomest woman in the navy."

She is endeavouring to draw from Alfred's letter some clue as to how she may expect to like the stranger who is coming. "Lost all her fortune,"—"poor thing,"—"quite a lady," "that's just what I wished for;" "very handsome,"—"so much the worse, beauties always give themselves airs; I daresay she will be full of them;" (is the lady thinking of some one she has known?) "and yet it is pleasant to look at a pretty thing;" "about twenty-four, he thinks"—"terribly young, these girls now are so flippant, and have no respect for their superiors, or a bit of reverence for any

one else. I hope Alfred has not sent me a governess instead of a companion, or we shall never agree," (Mrs Hervey is getting angry). "What is this on the other side? 'Hopes I will have a little patience with her at first, as she has had so much to try her lately.' Poor thing; but it is no reason why I am to be victimised because the young lady has met with some misfortunes. I believe Alfred has not got at all the right sort of person; and yet trouble is hard to bear," (perhaps something long past has been remembered), "and it is a cold day to be travelling." Apparently a new idea has occurred, for the old lady has risen, and is ascending, with an erect carriage, to another floor, where she enters a comfortable-looking room, in which a bright fire is burning; close behind her follows a white loup-dog, with every hair ready to stand on end with vexation. He considers it a duty to follow his mistress, but is of opinion she might have remained quietly by the fireside this cold day, and not take unnecessary journeys. With his tail curled to its most alarming tightness, he lies down, and listens as she addresses the housemaid—

"You must bring some more wood, Anne, and keep this fire up, for Miss Harcourt will be half frozen travelling such a day as this; mind now it does not go down at all, for I want the room to be nice and warm when she arrives." You need not fear, Eleanor, Mrs Hervey is evidently a kind person, after all. She is going, but suddenly comes

back: "And, Anne, we must take care that Fox does not bite the young lady this evening, as he is in the habit of doing to strangers; you must keep an eye on him when he is not with me." Fox has heard all. "That's his character is it? Give a dog a bad name, &c. What's the use of behaving better, particularly in such frosty weather?" so he gives the tail another curl, and follows to the drawing-room, with a fixed determination to make amends for his cold walk by snapping at the first person he does not know.

The twilight of a short winter's day steals on, and the holly berries can no longer be distinguished from the rest of the grey forms around. The robin went to his roost very soon after the sun ceased shining, and is already in his second sleep, for it is getting quite dark. Mrs Hervey sits by a bright fire, listening, and Fox is doing the same; no one shall hear anything sooner than himself; but they wait a long time before there is a sound of wheels rolling over the frozen snow. They draw nearer: the butler has seen the carriage, and hastens to open the door; the occupant of the drawing-room has done the same; from the entrances thus afforded comes forth one long bow, wow, wow, wo——w.

The traveller who has arrived has unfortunately a dislike to dogs. What shall she do? She shrinks back, afraid to cross the threshold; happily an imperative order is issued by some one who is in-

visible for an immediate return, which the butler finds means to accelerate. The coast is clear, and there enters at the drawing-room door, enveloped in furs, a form that looks more like that of a princess than a poor companion, who is coming to a situation.

They stand face to face those two: the ancient and the modern beauty; the womanly feeling of the elder lady is roused, she remembers how she has been told of desolation and distress, and, taking the young lady's hand, she kisses her cheek, and says, "she is glad to see her; is she not cold and tired?"

They sit down by the fire, and Mrs Hervey hears all about the journey, and then makes warm tea and coffee for the traveller. Fox is surprised, but he dare not speak if his mistress is satisfied; "he shall see about it by and by, *he* doesn't make friends so soon, not *he*;" but at present he lies close, and only growls occasionally, when he thinks Miss Harcourt is coming too near him. If he knew her better, he would not be in the least afraid, and little suspects how glad she feels when he disappears, as his mistress informs her, to go to bed.

Mrs Hervey little foresaw the effects of her kindly reception that evening. There is more in the manner of a first greeting than is sometimes thought, and it has often turned a scale for good or for evil. Ingratitude was not a fault of *Eleanor's*, and she never forgot, when most pro-

voked, and fractious, and unyielding, how on the first night of her arrival, a forlorn stranger, half frozen with cold, the old lady had met her with a kiss.

But Eleanor is really tired, and Mrs Hervey considerate, therefore at an early hour she advises Miss Harcourt to go to rest, and leave her to amuse herself with the letters and parcel come from the Rectory. Her companion gladly consents, and proceeds to her room, to which she had before been introduced; but in the passage arises an unexpected check: the couch to which Fox had retired, is a rug laid just outside her door, between it and his mistress' room which adjoins; he has guessed who is coming, and shews all his teeth with a snarl of satisfaction; "hadn't he expected to see her? Didn't he hear to-day which would be Miss Harcourt's room? And shouldn't he be able to bite her every time she went in and out if he felt inclined?"

Eleanor did not like to make an outcry in a strange house, but she had always had a fear of dogs, and Fox's demonstrations were really alarming. Had she known he was a member of the family, she would certainly have hesitated before coming. It was in vain she waved her candle, or tried to get successfully past him; alternate threats and coaxings were equally useless. Fox kept prowling round her in circles, like a hyæna, with the pleasant certainty of being able to bite her at *any moment he pleased*, only putting it off till it

suited him to do so. Fortunately, he made so much noise, that Anne, suspecting what was going on, and remembering the admonition given her, hastened to the spot, to the great relief of Eleanor, who thus protected gained her own room. But it was fearful to think of such a wild beast being at the door; and she inquired very pathetically from Anne whether it was not possible for Fox to repose elsewhere at night? The good tempered housemaid shook her head; whatever else might be done, that was impossible. Fox would not sleep a wink from excitement if his bed was changed to a new place; and her lady would lose her night's rest, that was certain, "thinking of him lying awake." The only thing to be done was, if Miss Harcourt would always ring when she wanted to pass, Anne would manage to come up and see that Fox didn't touch her; and after a time, perhaps, a treaty of peace might be made. With this Eleanor was obliged to remain contented; and when Anne had left, with a promise of being in attendance next morning to let her out again, she locked the door with all caution, lest her disagreeable neighbour should take a fancy to make good an entrance.

She was safe, however, at present; and whilst undoing the few things she required, laid her hand on the parcel which Adela had put in that morning, with an eager desire, now that it was recalled to her memory, to look at the recipe which was to work so great a charm. She drew it forth, and

seating herself by the fire, determined at once to ascertain in what consisted the means of attaining peace and happiness. She was rather astonished to find, on taking off the paper in which it was done up, that it was only a very nice edition of a book she had not only often seen, but of which she already possessed a copy ; there was a marker in it, as Adela had said, and on turning to the place, she read, guided by the pencil marks, these words :—

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

MATTHEW xi. 28, 29, 30.

It was no new book. Eleanor had read even the words themselves many times without pausing on their meaning ; it was different now ; and she sat long in the same place, lost in the train of thoughts which they had aroused in her mind. Mrs Hervey little guessed how late it was that night ere her companion retired to the rest which she so much needed.

Eleanor had made no mistake in thinking she should find it hard to conform perpetually to the wishes of another. Mrs Hervey had been in her youth of nearly the same temperament as her young companion, and retained much of it still. She had always been accustomed to a great deal

of respect and deference, which she continued to exact; had a great many crotchets which she carried out, and insisted on to an unreasonable degree; and had always been so punctilious in the performance of the minutest duties, that any carelessness, even in trifling matters, was in her eyes a great sin; and she was so far right, that they who are faithless over small things, are little fitted to rule over many. There was also one point which Adela had not mentioned, and of which, indeed, she was not aware, the infirmity having arisen since Mrs Hervey's last visit to the rectory. Since that time she had been growing rather deaf, and it was particularly difficult to her to catch what was said by a voice to which she was not accustomed, and which was never modulated with much regard to her necessities.

"Miss Harcourt," she would say, "how often I have told you, I cannot hear if you speak so low."

This was perhaps the third or fourth time in the day that the same remark had been made. Miss Harcourt's face would flush angrily, and the next occasion on which she spoke, her vexation would be apparent by her doing so in so loud a tone that the listener would say,

"You need not shout so, Miss Harcourt; I am not as deaf as a post."

"Loud or not," Eleanor would think angrily to herself, "it's all the same, there is no pleasing." She had never been with a deaf person, and was



not aware that their hearing or not depends much on the distinctness of articulation, more so than on an elevated voice ; and she wanted the humility to think that the fault lay with herself, because she would not take the pains to attain the proper key. The same impatience in little attentions ran through her life, making her intercourse with Mrs Hervey a constant fret-work ; and had she not promised Adela to stay, a very short time would have found her back at Redleigh, though she was really anxious to follow the counsel given, and to seek for peace from the only true source. Eleanor was in earnest, so there was hope ; but in the mean time, awaiting the coming of happier days and feelings, she thought the minutiae of life's ease would follow the things of greater consequence as a matter of course ; and so they do, but that she need take no trouble about them, therein she was wrong.

Mrs Hervey also had promised her son to have patience ; and therefore the letters sent by both parties to those at Redleigh, only expressed in general terms a hope that they should be able to get on together ; but their bearing and forbearing was, to say the least, of a very snip-snap sort of character, and the greater the trifle, very often the sharper the disagreement.

“ Miss Harcourt, I shall be obliged if you will wind these two skeins of silk for me this afternoon.”

“ Certainly, ma'am, I will do so at once.”

"Well, here they are, but you will have to take a great deal of care; they have got very much tangled, and will require patience."

Miss Harcourt sets about her task; patience is not much in her line. Presently the old lady resumes,

"You have taken the wrong winder, Miss Harcourt; have the kindness to change. You might have known, having done so many, that I always like my silk wound on the ivory, and not on the mother-of-pearl winders. I think I have told you so before."

She had done so, but Eleanor had never been able to see why one should not do as well as the other. She does not know that the mother-of-pearl set were brought as a present to Mrs Hervey by her son Ronald; she likes to see them in her work-box; but they have delicately carved corners which are brittle, and she is afraid of their being broken if used. Miss Harcourt obeys her directions; and throwing the winder carelessly down on the table, Mrs Hervey's fears are realized. A small piece snaps off; she is angry, but is told, "It is very little, a chip in fact, which will be hardly seen." Eleanor would have been sorry to have done any great damage; but she cannot make a fuss over the corner of a winder, and wonders Mrs Hervey should do so either. Her temper, however, has not been improved by what has passed; and no one ought to wind tangled silks, who is not in a very

placid state of mind. The knots and twists were too provoking, she broke them at every turn ; and Mrs Hervey who heard a constant snap, snap, and saw her silk all in ends, which she could not bear, at last requested Eleanor would not try to do any more, for she had not the patience necessary to wind even a common skein of silk. Miss Harcourt was deeply affronted, and would like to have said, as she might, perhaps with some truth, that this was anything but a common skein of silk ; but Mrs Hervey, who would have spent a couple of hours over it if necessary, was of no such opinion, and Eleanor in an ill humour sought her own room.

It did not fare better with the housekeeping, which under Mrs Hervey's supervision was entrusted to her companion, and she had never any fault to find with what was provided. Her table was well ordered, and suitable to a lady with her means ; but there was a constant turmoil about the bills, Eleanor's accounts and order-book never tallied with the cook's, and they were both alike in one respect, neither of them could ever explain how it was. Eleanor's ignorance arose from mere carelessness ; what the cook knew was not always so clear, but it was seldom possible to come at the bottom of the confusion, only there were always things to be paid for which were unexpected. And Mrs Hervey's wrath was great, to find that Miss Harcourt *as often as* not sent her orders by the

lady's maid, and only sometimes made the cook come to receive them ; she had never, she said, been in the habit of seeing ladies go into the kitchen : the cook said the same ; therefore, of course, she could not do so, and Mrs Hervey at last angrily expressed her surprise, that a person who had not patience enough to wind silk, or keep house properly, should have thought of coming where she was expected to be useful. The promise to Adela alone prevented Eleanor from saying she was ready to go at once.

It was a pity this was so, for her life might really have been very happy. Holly Lodge was a cheerful, pleasant place, and kept in nice order. Eleanor had all the luxuries of life to which she had been earlier accustomed : books, flowers, a piano, with every comfort she could desire ; and every afternoon that was tolerably fine, she accompanied the old lady in her drives through the pretty country by which they were surrounded. Besides the exercise she could at all times take in the grounds, there were days that Mrs Hervey was not going out, and did not want her, when she would walk into Hastings, and refresh herself on the beach, or by a brisk turn up and down the parade. Fox, who had long laid down his enmity, was content even to bear her company, an honour he did not often confer on any one besides his mistress ; but he seemed of opinion that Miss Harcourt was worth waiting on.

Mrs Hervey did not see much society, though occasionally friends came to Holly Lodge. One of Eleanor's great penances was having often to make up a rubber at whist, whenever an old lady, a Mrs Higgins, came to tea. She was generally accompanied by a niece, an elderly and sour-looking person; and if Mrs Hervey was often put out, it was worse with her two friends. Given three cross people, and a fourth who takes no pains to play well, or to try and recollect her cards, and what will the game at whist be? Those who have ever sat by, and witnessed such an one, may judge. On these evenings, Eleanor was always in high disgrace; but she never improved any the more, she was not going to devote her attention to learning such an old-fashioned game as whist.

Some months were thus spent in alternating storms and calms, warfare and truce, when the summer came, and before its close they were enlivened by a visit from Mrs Hervey's youngest son, the sailor. Ronald Hervey was sure to bring sunshine wherever he went, gloominess and ill temper vanished in his presence. The devoted attention, and never failing respect paid by the young lieutenant to his mother, had also a beneficial effect upon Eleanor, who even when most unreasonable was always open to conviction; and she began to think she might do well to imitate the sailor's example in many little ways, with advantage and comfort to them all. Ronald's

attention at whist was exemplary, and yet Eleanor knew, for he had told her, that he disliked cards, and that his only motive for playing was to contribute as far as possible to his mother's amusement.

He was himself by no means sorry at the addition he found to the household, and though Mrs Hervey complained very much, he still laughed on, and thought Miss Harcourt very agreeable. A few days before he was to leave, she found him alone in the drawing-room engaged in unravelling a skein of silk, which she at once recognised as one of those over which she had failed.

"Why, Mr Hervey," she exclaimed, "you have undertaken a troublesome task."

"So I perceive, it's all so plaguery knotty, and my fingers can manage a cable better than this kind of thing; but you see my lady mother was in despair over the skein, which she cannot see to do herself, and yet a great part of her happiness seems to depend upon having it done, so I said I would try what I could do."

He did not say that he had been listening for half an hour to the whole story of the silk and the broken winder, or that his mother had at last gone to take a drive, too angry at the bare remembrance to ask for Eleanor's company.

"I think my fingers would manage it better; suppose I take it, it is more in a lady's line."

"Oh, but," said he, putting on a comic look of alarm, "it's not to be broken in one place, at the peril of one's reputation; and then it's to be wound all the same way, or exactly at right angles when you do cross; and it's not to be dirtied, and there are no knots to be left in it; and, let me see, there's more still, I'm to take the right winder, and not to break the wrong one; and all to be done, moreover, by five o'clock. Miss Harcourt, dare you undertake the task?"

"I will try," said she, colouring, for it was evident he knew of the past; "at all events, I will do my best."

"No one can promise more, so I shall be right glad to make over this tangle to you, and I'll spin you a yarn to match, of the days I have been spending at Redleigh with our friends there."

It was a pleasant topic to her, nothing could have made a disagreeable undertaking seem so little troublesome, and he knew it. He had been staying at the rectory for some time, and had been often with the Edgertons; he liked them all so much he did not know who to admire most, saving always Adela, to whom every one gave pre-eminence. From both her and his brother he had heard all Eleanor's history before he came to the Lodge, and had been prepared, from what they had told him, to find, as he wrote to his brother, "a good many cloudy days." Eleanor already knew that the Edgertons had not gone to the seaside, and the boys were at home, while Ronald was

at Redleigh. Both were, he said, fine fellows, but he had clearly found a congenial spirit in Henry, who was wild to go to sea, and be a sailor like Ronald Hervey.

"I am afraid, though," said the latter, "his father will not let him; but it will be a shame to shut up a chap like that in a house, and deprive the country of a first-rate admiral; why, they'd have a pair in us two not to be met with every day," added he laughingly. "And you really have finished the silk; what a good boy I shall be thought. Miss Harcourt, I shall take all the credit;" he watched to see how she took this. "Pray do so," was the answer, "in return for your news of old friends." She was prevented from saying more by Mrs Hervey's return. Ronald at once presented the winder.

"Your silk is done, mother; is it as you wished? I do not think there is one knot, or break, or tangle, nothing that ought not to be there." It was carefully examined; 'No, it was perfect; the old lady was much obliged.' "Then, you must thank Miss Harcourt, ma'am, not me, she has been doing it all the afternoon; my fingers were far too clumsy." They turned to look for the person he spoke of. She had quitted the room unobserved; but though Mrs Hervey said nothing when they met, Eleanor felt sure by her manner that she knew what had passed.

Ronald's leave of absence was never very long, but he did not expect to be away on this cruise



many months, and told his mother that some time next year he should again drop anchor at Holly Lodge. She was always glad to see him, and every one felt his visit had done them good. When he was gone, they were left to get on again as best they might.

Eleanor had written to her brother from Mrs Hervey's, and had heard from him more than once; his letters, and those from Redleigh, were the greatest pleasures of her life; and though not yet all that could be wished, she had still advanced nearer to the spirit of those who wrote than at one time ever seemed likely. It was Christmas again, and nearly the year since she came, and she sometimes reflected whether she should leave, but the promise to Adela had been her safeguard; she was learning patience and self-discipline, even if but slowly, and she resolved not to stir unless others wished it. Mrs Hervey had of late been unusually irritable, and Eleanor felt, often with more sadness and self-reproach than it would have caused her some months sooner, how little she fulfilled what was required of her. They were both rejoiced when, at the end of December, Mr Hervey wrote to say he was to have a holiday of three weeks for the New Year, and should come with his wife in January to Holly Lodge. A visit from her sons was always one of the mother's greatest treats, and Eleanor looked forward with pleasure to the meeting with her kind friends.

## CHAPTER XV.

### The Rights of a Woman.

A servant by this clause,  
Makes drudgery divine.  
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,  
Makes that, and th' action fine.

—HERBERT.

MR and Mrs Hervey's visit to Holly Lodge was delayed beyond the time that had first been settled; it was not till February that they were able to leave Redleigh. Adela looked anxiously to the report they might bring back, as it was difficult to judge how things were really going on from letters. The first few days of their arrival, the pleasure all parties felt at meeting prevented the introduction of any disagreeable topics; but in the sunshine, Mr Hervey detected symptoms of its being only a temporary calm; and though Eleanor said nothing, there was more depression about her than he remembered having formerly observed.

Before long, however, Mrs Hervey poured forth

her complaints, in many instances perfectly just ones, to her son. It was evident that in the midst of much irritation and unreasonableness, she had still real cause of complaint. Her wishes were constantly neglected, and, above all, the housekeeping and the accounts were alway in a state of confusion. She had, she said, had patience for a long time, because Alfred had asked her, but Miss Harcourt was much too self-willed to mend, and was not at all the right sort of person to have sent her, as she always suspected. True, she was the perfect lady, clever, and agreeable when she pleased ; but of what value was that if she could not make herself of use in the common affairs of life ? The good lady waxed warm as she detailed her grievances ; and, making every allowance for a disposition at all times inclined to be over exacting, there still remained such a balance of truth against Miss Harcourt, that her son, whilst endeavouring to smooth down the speaker's wrath a little, began to fear he had, as she said, not found the proper person for her companion. He communicated what had passed to his wife, and requested she would see what she could do, by offering Miss Harcourt a little friendly advice. But gentle Mrs Hervey, who would have made every effort herself, always shrank from trying to teach others, and wanted courage to make the attempt. Matters, therefore, wore rather a gloomy aspect. The most promising thing being, in Mr

Hervey's opinion, that though Eleanor looked dejected, she made no efforts at all on her side to complain of his mother. On the contrary, when she did speak of her, it was generally to mention some kindness she had received. An incident connected with one of the domestic storms, which arose whilst he was with them, confirmed him in the belief that the case was far from hopeless, and that there was a work going on in Eleanor, which was sure in due time to produce its effects, and which a little kind help might hasten and confirm.

The winter had been very unlike that in which Eleanor had first come to Holly Lodge. There had been little snow, but much mild and wet weather, and in the month of February, high winds, which were unusual so early in the year. One day in particular, there blew a storm which resembled an equinoctial gale, and Mrs Hervey, gazing from the window into the garden, perceived that a little rose which had been set against the house, but had not attained much growth, was completely torn from its support, and was lying nearly flat on the earth, exposed to all the force of the wind that was blowing. Eleanor was the only person in the room, and calling her to the window, Mrs Hervey pointed out the plant, with a half request that she would kindly take a nail or two, and fasten it securely against further damage, as the gardener was away, and it would be in pieces before his return. • Eleanor looked in the direction

required, but with the sight rose a fractious sense of the wind that must be encountered, and that she had not undertaken to do gardener's work, which she chose to consider gave right on her side, as she replied hastily, "She had never nailed up a plant in her life, and did not know how or where to find the tools to do it with; it was certainly only a man's work." Mrs Hervey was annoyed. "It was very vexatious," she said, "that the gardener had asked leave to go home that week to see his father, who was ill; but for her bad rheumatism she would have done it herself; as it was, she could not lift her arm." "There was no hurry," Eleanor said; "those kind of common roses were very hardy; it would not be hurt by waiting another day, and Simmons was coming back in the evening," with which words she left the room to avoid further discussion on the subject.

Mrs Hervey gazed wistfully at her plant thus left to its fate; it was very small and delicate, and when an hour after the wind went down a little, and heavy rain came on, it was getting each minute more and more bruised, and buried in the wet earth. Her son found her when he came in, of no placid mood, as she angrily complained of her new grievance; and he promised as soon as the rain was over to set it all right himself, being better able to face the weather than a lady. There seemed, however, little chance of its clearing. The

old lady declared her resolution of not looking out any more, as it only vexed her; and Mr Hervey left the room for the purpose of getting the implements, to do what was wanted at once. He was however, some time in finding them; and when he reached the corner of the wall against which the plant grew, he saw what at once put a stop to his intended proceedings. It was still raining fast; but regardless of this, Eleanor was on her knees beside the poor little rose, carefully freeing its weak branches from the earth with which they were covered. She was too much occupied to hear footsteps approaching, and he stood watching her, as she tenderly placed it against the wall, and nailed up every little runner with great precision into its place. When the operation was finished, she stepped back to see that it was securely done, and was startled to hear Mr Hervey say, from behind her,

“You have had a wet task, Miss Harcourt; are you not afraid of catching cold?”

“It is not the very finest weather for gardening certainly; but the rose seemed in danger of coming to an untimely end, before it could be attended to by more skilful hands than mine. And that my work was not done before the rain came on, was my own fault, so for that I have no one to blame but myself.”

He looked at her kindly. Yes, there was hope; but she did not gather his thoughts from his next words:

"My mother will be much obliged by your care of her little rose; she values it highly because it was given to my father by a sailor, whose brother he had helped out of some foolish scrape the man had got into. It is, I believe, a very rare kind, not much known in England, and was the last thing my father planted before his death; it has never yet flowered, and to nurse it into bloom is one of my mother's hobbies."

"I am glad you have told me its history, which is quite an interesting one, and will make me henceforward watch it with equal care. Now I must dry myself after my winter's gardening."

Mrs Hervey who always kept her resolutions, looked no more out of the window till the next morning, when the sun was shining brightly, and the rose, benefitting by the warmth, looked very happy in its old place.

"What an invaluable man Simmons is, and what eyes he has," said his mistress; "he cannot have returned many hours, and my rose is all beautifully set to rights."

Her son was the only person present. "You must give the credit elsewhere, however," said he; "I myself saw Miss Harcourt nail it up carefully yesterday, in the midst of rain sufficient to give any lady cold. Her good deed must have kept her warm, for I have been glad to observe she appears not to have suffered." His mother said little; but later in the day her warm thanks, and admiration

of the work, brought a glow of pleasure to Eleanor's face, and the old lady and the young one felt happier together than they had been for some time.

The period for their visitors' return home was drawing near, and Eleanor, who felt she had true friends in Mr Hervey and his wife, had been unable as yet to consult them on the subjects which were weighing on her mind. She profited by a mild but damp day, which made Mrs Hervey afraid to go out, on account of her rheumatism, to join them in a walk round the garden and shrubbery, determined not to let the opportunity pass. It was not without an effort, however, that after walking in silence some distance, she forced herself to speak:

"What different weather it is, to this time last year when I had just come here. Mr Hervey, did you ever know that Adela made me promise, unless I was sent away, to stay a year at Holly Lodge?"

"No, I did not; has that then been your only reason for remaining?"

"It is that which has kept me here, instead of my running away whenever things were not just as I liked. It would have been very wrong, for I have met with much kindness. Adela saved me."

"Then you no longer wish to leave your present abode?"

"I do not know; that is the very thing I have been wishing to ask you about, if you will tell me



what is best. You must have seen, Mr Hervey, since you came, and I am quite sure you must have been told, how very unequal I am to make a good companion for your mother; and it is certainly not right she should continue to pay so high a salary for what does not suit her. I should be sorry to go; but cannot help thinking perhaps I ought to propose doing so, as Mrs Hervey may refrain from saying as much out of forbearance towards one whom you have befriended. Adela is not here to advise me, and you must be the judge, and say if I ought to look for something better suited to my capabilities." She seemed to wait anxiously for a reply.

"You have asked a question which is not very quickly answered; one thing to be considered before deciding hastily is, whether the position is one you are really unable to fill properly. I cannot deny that there are many complaints lodged in the court of which I seem to be constituted judge; one of the heaviest appears to be that the cook and the housekeeper are never of the same mind."

"I think she must be particularly wasteful, for though not accustomed to housekeeping, I do not give extravagant orders, and you can judge yourself of what comes to table, yet the bills are always too high, and never right."

"But my dear Miss Harcourt," said Mrs Hervey, who seemed to think the cook came fairly into her province, "why not see to these kind of things

more carefully, and go daily yourself to give your orders in person."

"I do not suppose cook would let me, Mrs Hervey, and if she did, it would be of no use. I could not sit there all day, to watch what she did."

"True, and what is more, nothing would be worse than a constant fidgeting a servant, when she once knows her mistress' wishes; but you would find that your presence, once every morning, would have a great effect, and be a check upon wastefulness or dishonesty, whichever is the evil. You would see that the orders you had given had been carried out; at present you rely upon hearsay as to what may be required. You will never control your bills if you have a mistress in your cook."

"Mrs Hervey's advice is good, I think," rejoined her husband, "and comes, moreover, from experience, therefore is the more worth following; no opinion I could have given on that subject would have had such weight."

"No," said Eleanor, "the men leave things like that to us women, and they little know the drudgery of them, or the vexatious smallness of what requires our attention. They monopolize all the great and interesting affairs of life, and leave us the wear and tear of its invisible machinery, which they consider just suited to the littleness of woman's mind, and if she steps beyond, they tell her she is neglecting her duty!"

He looked surprised. "Miss Harcourt, the arduous task of governing the cook appears to have made you angry; even the thought too much for you in fact, and as is often the case, caused you to lay the blame on the wrong shoulders. I can convince you on the highest authority, no less than that of the Scriptures, *all* of which we are told were written for our learning, that woman's duty, yes, her duty, may lead her into high as well as humble spheres of action."

Eleanor was silent, she was feeling ashamed of her hasty words; and Mr Hervey continued:

"We will take a few of the Old Testament characters whose history is the most prominent; compare them as they pass in review. We have Sarah, 'who obeyed her lord, calling him master.' We can scarcely doubt she ruled her household with all diligence. We have Deborah, the prophetess, dwelling under a palm-tree and judging Israel. We have Esther, the queen, saving a nation on her throne. We have Ruth, the Moabitess, supporting her mother-in-law by gleaning in the field. Are there not here both 'the lofty and the lowly?' If you wish for another type, we can find it, in Joel, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, who was 'blessed among women;' and Judith coming forth from the camp of the Assyrians with the head of Holofernes in a bag. We find no record to say that those whom I have named were doing other than their duty; on the contrary, there is

attached an express commendation to their names."

Gentle Mrs Hervey smiled. If she could not have played the part of a Judith, she thought of one who might have done so.

"The enterprising ladies are really much obliged to you for the simile, Mr Hervey," said Eleanor.

"You make it not, I remember; but you will hardly hold to your assertion that woman is limited to one course of action."

"I grant you have proved your side of the question; but still it does not quite help me in my perplexity. I have not an earthly lord like Sarah to call master; sitting under palm-trees, and judging nations like Deborah, is not the fashion of the times. I have no throne like Esther, the queen; no mother-in-law like Ruth, who needs the corn I glean; the decision of a Joel or a Judith requires a great emergency to recommend it, and a tyrant for its object. I still ask something which shall be a landmark to womankind generally, dividing plainly what may be her proper path from what cannot be; and I, a woman, ask you, Mr Hervey, to tell me how I shall at all times discover a woman's duty; whose example is it best to follow?"

"If you ask me that, I answer without hesitation, that it is never well to set up for our standards mortals like ourselves, however near *perfection* they may seem to have attained; there-

fore I would say, seek not yours in the histories of the good of the earth, nor among those whom we may see around us, and know to be the joy of many hearts, 'the crown of rejoicing' in many homes ; beautiful and lovely examples as they are, I would beckon you to higher ground, and place woman before you, as the Bible has defined her, 'a help meet' for man.

"A help meet for those who have stood in the breach, and resisted the torrents of error and woe ; a help meet for the noble hearts who stand there now, for the workers who bear the burden and heat of the day, for those who may have fainted under the pressure ; for many who by her care and training shall arise to the contest in their generation. Helper of the brave, the noble, and the good ; helper of the young, the weak, and the unstable ; of the ignorant, the erring, and the deluded ; of the sick, the aged, and the friendless ; of her family and of her household ; the helper, in one word, of all who need help : shall those who have been marked out for such an honourable position, be satisfied with less than the ennobling title, *help meet* for mankind ?"

"Mr Hervey, you have indeed made much of woman."

"Those who would make less of her, Miss Harcourt, rob her of the rightful dignity she holds by divine charter. It is they who make little of a woman who would persuade her that she is a crea-

ture made only for flattering, vanity, and self-indulgence, and hide from her all, of which an account must be given, if she prove faithless to her trust, and desert it for the gratification and amusement of the passing hour."

"But," said Eleanor, sadly, "there are few equal to be what you have described; I, at least, am not one."

"Then you may be; and it is a false humility which tempts the idea that any are not sufficient for the purpose to which their Creator designed them. If there were only their own strength to rely on, there might be cause, not for fear only, but for despair; but for the duty has likewise been promised the grace, if only sought; and who shall doubt the Maker's power to do according to His will? Let the effort to fulfil the end for which each one was created—the glory of God—be but prayerfully and honestly made in the performance of every duty, to each and all, and woman shall find a plain path, whereon she may add to the number who have already proved that God's strength may be made perfect in weakness. To each he appoints a state of life to which He has been pleased to call them. We learn this as a childish truth, deeming the words, perhaps, but an infant's lesson, and yet the grey-haired man finds he has never been able to do more than his duty where a sovereign power has seen good to place him."

"I never thought of all this before, and begin to feel quite a new character. The worst is, I see no likeness in the mirror of truth you have held before me."

"Do not despair; if not now, the outlines I have drawn may be a portrait yet. There is nothing to prevent their becoming such; you have only to follow present duty with the humbleness of a child that needs constant instruction. '*Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth;*' and to the sincerely repeated prayer, '*Lord, what wouldest Thou have me to do?*' there will never be wanting '*a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.*' And, I may add, doing one's duty consists much less in doing extraordinary things, as in doing ordinary things as well as possible."

There was silence for a few minutes, which was broken by Eleanor.

"How good you are, Mr Hervey, to take so much pains with such a wayward person. If I ever improve, you and Adela will have all the credit."

"Not so," he answered earnestly; "we can but be the instruments of a higher power, which would lead all by loving mercy to their true good; winning them to inquire of the Lord, and to follow Christ. An old divine has well expressed what this is in speaking of another woman of old whom we have not mentioned. His words are these:— '*Rebecca was said to go and inquire of the Lord.*'

Whither went she? From the place where He was not, to the place where He was? No. I, the Lord, fill heaven and earth. She went not from place to place, as it is not required to do in following Christ; but she went from life to life, from manners to manners, from good to better, from grace to grace, and this is to follow Christ, the Lord of glory.”\*

“Thank you; I shall try and remember that, and to understand these things better. But it is time for me to go in, and you have not answered my question, if you think I ought to propose leaving Holly Lodge?”

“No, I do not; at least not until you have tried again, whether you may not be less unsuited to the post than you suppose. One point on which you have won my mother’s good opinion is, that you have gained Fox’s esteem; and in other things I am inclined to believe the difficulty less want of capacity, than —. Shall I finish?”

“You need not,” was the laughing answer; “I will complete the sentence conscientiously in my own mind, and if you advise another trial, will make it. You have been a good while alone, ma’am,” added she, as they entered the drawing-room; “my walk has been longer than I intended, but the time passed quicker than I thought.”

“Because you seldom give yourself the trouble to think, Miss Harcourt. Now you are come, be

\* *Disce Vivere.* Christopher Sutton, D.D.



so good as to put Fox's rug straight, it has been disturbing him all the afternoon, poor fellow."

"I wonder," said Eleanor, doing as she was requested, "that Fox, who is so strong-minded on some points, should be put out by such a trifle."

"It is not a trifle to him; he hasn't shut his eyes since you went, but has never taken them off the end of the rug, which was turned up. Why, Alfred, I looked out at the window not long ago, and thought, by the way in which you were speaking, you must be preaching a sermon."

"I suppose my subject must have excited me, mother. I was instructing my wife and Miss Harcourt on 'the rights of woman.'"

"It is quite unnecessary, as far as Miss Harcourt is concerned; she has too great an idea of them already, I assure you."

"My lecture will do no harm, ma'am, and is to be followed by a general reformation in woman's duties, beginning with account books, and ending,—let me think,—with Fox's rug."

"Well, I hope it may. Miss Harcourt, if your head is not turned, perhaps you will give me my spectacles; my arm is too stiff to reach them myself."

"I assure you, ma'am," answered the young lady addressed, and handing what was required, "it comes among my privileges to do as you wish."

The old lady was mollified, and kissing her, said, "I am often angry, my dear; and to-day I *think my rheumatism is making me very cross.*"

## CHAPTER XVI.

### Storms by the Sea.

"As a wild wave in the wide north sea,  
Green glimmering towards the summit, bears with all  
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies  
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,  
And him that helms it,"

—IDYLLS OF THE KING—TENNYSON.

WHEN, at the end of another week, Mr and Mrs Hervey returned home, all parties looked hopefully to the future ; and in Eleanor's letters to Adela, through the spring and summer, there was a happy, quiet tone, which gave the latter much comfort. She longed to see Eleanor again, but of this there appeared no chance for the present, as Mrs Hervey was not coming that year to pay a visit at the rectory ; and, after all, it was perhaps better that Eleanor should be left a while to work out her lesson without leaning too much on human sympathy and assistance. Mrs Hervey, with all her faults, was a good woman ; she was only one

of those who have been well described as "crotchety Christians," not to be likened to a "palm-tree."

Therefore Adela, as she had so often done before, trusted quietly for the future. She knew that it is sometimes both wisdom and "strength" to "sit still" (Isaiah xxx. 7). In July Mr Edgerton took all the family back to their old haunts by the sea. He purposed remaining with them himself, as the place had now a new attraction for him, from an old naval friend having lately gone to reside there. Captain Stevens was a bachelor, though not of an age to like being called old. He had, whilst on service, met with an accident which incapacitated him from following his profession, and having means enough to make himself comfortable, was, he said, "laid up in ordinary for his natural life." He had fixed his home close on the sea-shore, that he might be able from time to time to see his "old lady," as he termed the vessel he had commanded, whenever her business might bring her that way on her sea path. George and Henry did not come home now till July, in consequence of being at a public school. Henry, whose love for the sea had increased instead of diminishing, became a great favourite with his father's friend, whose side he seldom left except for the company of the boatmen on the beach, among all of whom he lived on the terms of closest friendship, and Adela and the girls had very little of his company.

Among all his seafaring acquaintances, however,

there were none with whom Henry was so intimate as with a family of the name of Heath, who lived in a small cottage which stood by itself on the beach, at the foot of the high cliffs, and so close to the sea as hardly to be out of the reach of the waves, the heavy spray sometimes washing almost over it. It was farther from town than the quarter in which the greatest part of the fishing population resided, but the Heath family had occupied it for many years, in fact ever since Tim had brought home a mistress for his house. Old as it was, they would probably not have been so comfortable elsewhere, and the fishing had always been profitable enough to keep them from want. The family consisted of Mr and Mrs Tim, a daughter, and two sons who followed their father's calling, and accompanied him to sea. In partnership with some of their neighbours, they owned a large fishing-boat, which had been named "The Lovely Peggy," we believe in compliment to Mrs Tim, who had been introduced to the firm as a bride just at the time they were purchasing the new boat, which was henceforth to provide her with the necessaries of life. "The Lovely Peggy" had always borne a lucky character, and her owners were known as industrious and enterprising men, who frequently went far for what they sought, and often stayed away many days, seldom returning empty-handed, having generally found a market *for their fish elsewhere, or among the boats which*

kept nearer at home. In their shorter trips, Henry had often accompanied them, and under their apprenticeship he became expert in the management of a boat. To his frequent entreaties to be taken on some of the deep-sea fishings Tim had always returned a sturdy refusal. The old man was too honest to lead him into mischief, and knew very well he would never obtain his father's consent, therefore Harry had for some time ceased to say anything about his favourite project.

The month of August was drawing to a close, and with the last week came a good deal of what sailors term dirty weather; not actually stormy, but not fair, and a threatening of something worse blowing up. Adela and the girls, when walking on the parade, had found it more windy than was pleasant, but they loitered for some time, watching the fishing-boats that were launched from the beach one after another, with the receding tide. The morning, though blowing, was apparently not considered unfavourable for the craft; and as the sails were spread to catch the wind, which was freshening more and more, the scene was at once picturesque and animated.

Henry had not been seen since the early morning; but neither this, nor yet his non-appearance at the usual dinner hour, excited any surprise, as he was often all day with Captain Stevens; and indeed *sometimes relished a herring of Mrs Tim's cook-*

ing, when out among the rocks in that direction crab-fishing, in which the young men liked well to assist him if not employed elsewhere. He had always been expected, when thus absent, to say where he was going; and Adela resolved to request her father would speak to him about having failed to do so as usual, the more so as George, who was at home, did not seem in the least to know where his brother was, and had been unable to find him since breakfast. Mr Edgerton had gone for a long walk, and would not return till the evening.

With each successive hour the wind rose, till the sea was crested with white waves, and broke more and more angrily on the shore. Adela drew her chair to the window to watch the fishing boats, many of which were then returning in the evident expectation of bad weather. Her mind was not quite at ease about the absentee, but she hoped at worst he might have gone with the Heaths for a few hours, as he had often done before, and that in common with others they would shortly return. She strained her eyes in vain to ascertain if any of the boats in sight carried the rigging of "The Lovely Peggy;" and at last perceived that nearly all had returned, and were being hauled up by their owners to be made snug against an approaching gale. George had been down among the men on the beach, who told him they knew nothing of *Henry*; that "The Lovely Peggy" had been out

many hours, but they had not seen her go, and that even if her crew wished, it was not likely they could now get back with the wind that was at present blowing, and threatening to increase to a gale. They were not even in sight, and the sea-shore was becoming every hour more dangerous; any boats out after that tide would have to run for shelter to some other harbour; but with one exception, Tim's was the only boat not returned. Adela's anxiety increased, when George added, that he had been to Captain Steven's lodging, and found that he had accompanied Mr Edgerton in his walking expedition; the servant said that Mr Henry was not with them, and neither before nor since had he been to the house. The only thing to be done, was to send George down to ascertain exactly from Mrs Tim where her husband was, and whether Henry was with him. She waited eagerly for his return, but he had some way to go, and before Mr Edgerton and Captain Stevens came in, her alarm was excessive. It was getting dusk, but not a sail was visible on the sheet of white foam which was in their view; everything seemed to have sought and found shelter. The gentlemen shared her uneasiness, when George, who had run all the way, arrived with the intelligence that the Heaths had been among the first who left in the morning. The two Peggies, mother and daughter, had been washing at the back of the place, and *had not seen them start*. They had heard no-

thing of Henry that day, and as Tim was intending to stay out, thought he could not be with them, as she had often heard them refuse to allow him on such occasions to make one of the party; she had added, that when the gale rose they expected the Peggy would have returned, and they might yet come, as there was still one other boat out also; but she hoped they would make for nearer shelter. It was evident, however, that the fisherman's wife was far from easy on the subject.

Late as it was, Mr Edgerton and Captain Stevens at once agreed to take opposite routes along the coast, to the nearest ports which the boats were in the habit of frequenting, to ascertain if those missing had reached them. Mr Edgerton bade Adela rest tranquilly in the assurance that she should hear from him as soon as possible, and he hoped to say that their inquiries had been successful.

She sat at the window gazing wistfully out, as long as a gleam of light remained; then she rose, and speaking cheerfully to the girls, that they might not suspect her terror, sent them to bed, whither George soon followed, because, he said, the time would pass quicker, and to-morrow he supposed they should have all the party back early. Adela said she hoped so, or at all events during the day, and in this comfortable conviction his slumbers were speedy and sound.

But rest came not for his sister; and in the faint



hope of the boat still returning, and a desire to be on the spot if it should do so, she put on her bonnet and heavy shawl, and leaving the sleepers to the charge of their old and faithful attendant, she took the path that led along the shore to Tim's cottage, accompanied by Miss Flyn. They had much difficulty in keeping their feet from the violence of the wind, and were wet with spray before they reached the little house. A light gave notice that there were watchers within, and Mrs Heath herself opened the door, at the sound of the unwonted knock, expecting to hear news of her husband. She started to see who the visitors were.

"It is a bad road, and a wild night for you, Miss Edgerton, and I know why you are come, but its myself hopes the boy is not with them that are on the sea to-night."

Adela had no strength left to answer, but struggled into the little room, her dress damp with spray, and her face without a vestige of colour from anxiety. The kind-hearted woman hastened to take off her wet things, and dry them by the fire that was still burning on the hearth.

"You mustn't take on so, Miss," continued Mrs Heath, forgetting her own fears at the sight of another's distress; "I'll make bold to say they are safe in one of the other ports, and will all be here to-morrow; though I have put a light in the window, *it's not that I* expect them, only in case

they might come, to shew Tim there's his wife at least watching for him."

Adela tried to smile; "Mrs Heath, I thought you would let me come and watch with you, in case they should arrive; and my father is gone to see if he can hear of them. But if I feel so, what must it be for you and Peggy? You will think me very selfish."

"Selfish, is it, Miss! Those that live about here know better; no, it's only what I used to be when I was a young woman, and first married to my Tim. Many and many is the night that I've sat to listen, and dreaded for the morning that might bring him a corpse to my door; and when the boys first went it was nearly as bad, but Tim always laughed when he came back: 'Peggy,' says he, 'you've but a poor heart, after all, and you've forgotten the sea can't drown any one without it's God's will it should do so.'"

Adela felt that her trust, too, had been but small; but she still shuddered to hear the clanging surge on the beach, as each wave that broke shook the little cottage to its foundation, and the wind swept round it in eddies that seemed to threaten its ruin. Miss Flyn had been anxiously watching from the window, where the lamp was burning, and suddenly exclaimed that some one was coming. It proved to be the coastguard, who had just come to his beat, and who had called to say that the last boat had arrived, and had got in with difficulty.

It was impossible for any more to run in, as the tide had turned, and any vessel driven on shore while the gale lasted would be dashed to pieces. "The Lovely Peggy" had been seen before dark apparently making for another harbour, but it was thought she seemed in trouble; the other crew had been unable to get within hail, but had remarked there seemed more people than usual in the boat; whether one was a boy they could not tell. The rough sailor looked compassionately at the ladies, and promised to let them know if he heard any further news. The darkness passed slowly to the anxious watchers, and the grey light of morning revealed nothing but a wide waste of water and white foam, unbroken by a single sail. The little lamp had burnt down in its socket, and Adela, overpowered with fatigue, slept an uneasy sleep with her head resting on a chair beside her. Her bonnet had fallen back, and hung on her shoulders, and one tear was still stealing down her pale cheek. "She's a nice lady," said Mrs Tim, looking at her kindly, "and there's not many like her; but it's lucky she's not a fisherman's wife."

As the morning advanced, the wind went down. George, who had heard where his sister was, came to say that there was no news of the absent party, and Adela, with many thanks for Mrs Heath's kindness, determined at once to return home. There was nothing to do but to wait. The day *wore away without tidings*, but in the evening

came a messenger from Mr Edgerton, and a letter from Captain Stevens. They had heard nothing of the boat, but there was no cause for despair; the gale had been exceedingly heavy, and the fishing boats had been scattered in all directions, to find shelter as best they could. From some of the ports two or three were missing, and the Peggy might still turn up further from home: Adela would now not be able to have any tidings for a day or two.

She endeavoured to struggle against her own fears, that she might be all in all to those round her, and she sought where she had so often found it, strength to bear the suspense bravely. It had never been asked in vain, and the rest of the party little suspected the effort it cost her, as on the second morning, which was much calmer, she cheerfully proposed they should take a walk. The air had a beneficial effect, and she remained longer than she had at first thought possible. They were returning towards home, when their attention was attracted by a crowd upon the beach, composed chiefly of fishermen, who appeared to be examining something that had been brought up with the tide. George proposed they should go and see what it was they were looking at, as there were often curious things washed on shore. On reaching the spot, he spoke to the man outside the ring, who was nearest him, and who, on turning round and recognising the party, said, "You had better

not bring the lady here, sir." But Adela had heard the words; and quickened her step till she stood in the centre of the group. Upon the beach lay a piece of dark wood, which the last wave had cast up. It was the stern of a boat, and though partly broken, the word Peggy was still visible and entire. No one spoke; the nights of watching and anxiety had left Adela little strength, a film came over her eyes as she gazed, and she would have fallen had not the coastguard who had seen her at Mrs Heath's, and was the person who had spoken to George, caught her in his arms, and carried her out of the crowd up to Mr Edgerton's house.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### Visions of an old Sailor.

"There be some things in this comedy of *Pyramus and Thisbe* that will never please. Write me a prologue ; and let the prologue seem to say, We will do no harm, and *Pyramus* is not killed indeed."

THE breaking of a grey and cloudy morning saw her Majesty's ship *Phoenix*, thirty-two guns, beating up on her way home from a foreign station to Spithead. Neither in her outward or homeward passage had she encountered such bad weather as in the preceding night, which had been one of storm, and during many hours she had been scudding under bare poles, before a fierce gale, and in sight of a lee shore. The danger was passed ; and though there still remained the angry swelling of a sea that had been lashed to fury by a tempest, there was nothing to impede her progress as she stood steadily on her course, with the wind, that still blew freshly, in her favour.

The lieutenant who was on watch had been

pacing the deck briskly for some time, contrasting rather unfavourably the dawning of the cheerless morning with that of the warmer climates from which they were returning. While thus occupied, something dark in the distance caught his eye, and calling to a man with a telescope, he desired him to see what it was. The sailor brought the glass to bear in the direction pointed out, and it became evident that the object in question was a boat, the men in which were endeavouring to attract notice by hoisting signals of distress. "It's most likely, sir," said the man, "one of the fishing-boats from somewhere here on the coast; they must have been got caught in the gale last night, and have probably sprung a leak. Shall I call the captain?" Receiving an answer in the affirmative, he proceeded below, and before many minutes elapsed, the commander had reached the deck, and satisfied himself of the statement made. "We must bring her round, sir, and fetch the poor fellows. It must never be said the good ship *Phoenix* passed any in distress without helping them; pipe up the hands, Mr Watson, and let a boat be sent at once to take them in. Mr Hervey, you will see that it is done as soon as possible."

Before long the *Phoenix* might have been observed bearing down on another tack, and a boat, manned by strong and willing rowers, was struggling through the sullenly-heaving sea, in the direction of those who needed assistance. Their

progress was anxiously watched by those on board the frigate, who distinguished with the glass that the crew of the boat consisted of four men. There was also a large dark object laid carefully in the stern, the nature of which they were unable to conjecture. As the men from the *Phoenix* approached, it appeared as if they saw some reason for haste, their efforts were redoubled, and they soon floated alongside of those they were sent to save. Before any one stirred, the dark bundle which had been observed was raised, and carefully placed in the other boat; the mer then followed, and before they had got far on their return, the fishing boat was seen to disappear entirely from the place she had so lately occupied.

A hearty cheer burst from the men on board the vessel as they came alongside, which was returned by the boat's crew; and the lieutenant who leant over to watch them perceived that the object which had excited curiosity was the body of a young boy, which had been wrapped in one of the torn sails. The men who stepped on deck were hardy-looking, weather-beaten fishermen.

"We've got them, sir," said one of the men in the boat approaching; "but they'd have been in Davy's locker in another half-hour, and it was a mercy they were seen. There's a young chap, too, with them, that has run away from home to take his first cruise, and the sooner the doctor takes a touch at him, I think, the better. He's



got more roughly handled than he's used to ; and there are sore hearts for him somewhere, I'll be bound, this morning."

Ronald Hervey, for it was indeed he, advanced to the fore part of the vessel, where the men were collected ; they made way for him, and in a few seconds he stood by the torn sail, uttering an exclamation of surprise, as he recognised the apparently lifeless form of Harry Edgerton.

The sailors, whose sympathy had been already excited by the story they had been hearing from Tim, shewed redoubled interest when they found that the lad, whose pluck they had been admiring, was known to their officer, who was a universal favourite on board. The most careful nurses could not have carried him below with greater tenderness, to the lieutenant's cabin. And had their own lives been at stake, there could not have been more anxiety to make the surgeon aware that his presence was desired without delay.

But it was long before all the care bestowed could restore warmth and animation to the child's frame ; and Tim, with tears on his weather-beaten cheeks, wrung his hands in an agony, to think of Master Henry being dead, and of the distress of every one at home. It appeared from his story, that when they launched the boat the morning before, they had no idea of his being there. Aware that Tim would never consent to take him, and yet determined to go, he had contrived to hide

himself among some of the large nets which were piled at one end, and it was not till they were well out at sea that Harry had laughingly crept out of his hiding-place, and told Tim he had come in spite of him. The wind was then freshening to a gale, and the old man was anxious on all accounts to return at once. The others, however, would not agree, until the increasing storm had made it impossible to do so. They beat about the whole night, but sprung a leak, and it had required every exertion to keep themselves afloat. Harry had throughout worked as hard as any one, but the child's strength at last gave way; he had also received a blow on the head, and about an hour before they had been received by the *Phoenix*, he had sunk to the bottom of the boat, exhausted with fatigue and exposure, to which his frame was unaccustomed. They had wrapped him in a sail, and expected they must shortly all go down together, when, with feelings they could not describe, they perceived their signals were answered from the frigate, and that a boat had been despatched to their rescue.

They were, however, rejoiced to find that later in the day Harry gave symptoms of recovery, though he lay in a deep and heavy sleep, moving uneasily from side to side, without any consciousness of where he was. Ronald could not have watched him with greater anxiety had he been his own brother; and when they anchored the next morning, he requested and obtained leave to go

on shore at once to one of the hotels. Harry was still in a state of stupor, but was, the surgeon said, not in danger, and would recover sooner if removed. The first boat, therefore, that left the ship carried Lieutenant Hervey and his charge to land, and later in the day the crew of "The Lovely Peggy" were brought on shore also, not without a subscription having been got up by the brave fellows of the *Phoenix*, to assist them in buying a new boat, and getting home. This they were anxious at once to do, that they might carry news of their being in safety to those who would suppose they were lost. Ronald wrote by post and also by them, to assure the Edgertons of Harry's well-doing, and that he hoped that in a few days he would be able to bear the journey home.

The joy of all parties may be imagined when Ronald's letter, which was the first news of the missing boat, arrived; and Mr Edgerton, who had come back the night before from his unavailing search, at once set out for Portsmouth." In the course of the day, after he left, it was known through the place that the lost fishermen had returned to their homes; and Mrs Heath came up to bring the letter and news of which Tim had been the bearer. The good woman, albeit a fisherman's wife, had evidently been crying for joy at the safety of her husband and sons, whom she had given up for lost, when the piece of the *Peggy* had come on shore. The next day, Adela walked down

to the little cottage to see Tim, who, it appeared, had been afraid to deliver the message himself, for fear of the blame which might be laid to him for having Henry with them. Ronald had, however, taken care to state what had occurred, so as to exonerate the fishermen, and also added, that though, of course, Harry's conduct was not to be defended, yet as he had suffered so much already, and was very weak, he hoped his fault might be forgiven, in the thankfulness for his safety. Adela felt that to look on his merry face again would make amends for all she had undergone during the last few days.

She could scarcely believe the path along which she walked, or the house itself to be the same, as she remembered on that night of terror. The waves were washing against the cliff with their accustomed gentle murmuring; the sun shone brightly on the blue waters, and the little boats were dotting the surface of the summer sea, as if there were no such thing as the danger they had so lately witnessed. Tim was standing at the door when Adela reached the cottage, and taking off his cap, he led the way in, and put a chair for the lady in silence; he could not speak, and she saw he was waiting for her to begin the conversation.

"Tim," said she kindly, "you must not think we can be angry at what was not your fault. Mr Hervey has told us exactly how it all happened,

and I came here to-day to tell you how thankful we feel in our joy for master Harry, that you too have all reached home safely."

"It is indeed a mercy, lady, and we cannot be too thankful for it, though the old boat's gone. But it was having the boy with us, and knowing how you'd be feeling, that made it all the worse for me; and when I saw him lifted up the ship's side, dead-like as it seemed, I thought I could never bear to come home again, and see you all, if he died there."

"You forget, Tim, again, that we knew you could not help it; and if your wife has been telling you what a coward I was, when we sat in your little room the night of the storm, you must remember that if I was a poor body, it was my first time of being tried."

"I know, ma'am, and I reckon it is a trial to have an aching heart, when the wind blows, for those who are away. My Peggy there knows that too, but she's learnt there is one who is greater than the storm, and has often brought us back safe. Master Harry would make a fine sailor, Miss; he worked as hard as any of us, and when we were in despair that the water came in so, he kept saying, 'Bale away, boys, no fear, Tim; bale away, we went well over that wave; there, we're not drowned yet, very near though;' and then he'd say, 'If I were you, Tim, I wouldn't care a bit; it's only *when I think of those at home that I feel*

afraid, because I've done wrong, you see ; but if ever we get back, I'll behave better to them all ; only I should like to be in a good ship such a night as this, and see her cutting along. Hurrah, boys ! I see a sail, we shall be saved yet.' But poor fellow he never knew how we got on shore after all, for when they took us up he was all stiff and cold, and I thought we should never hear his voice again."

"You were mercifully preserved," said Adela, "and I hope master Henry may not suffer much more from his foolishness, and that the blow on his head may not prove of consequence."

"I hope not, Miss ; he was doing well when we left ; it's a brave heart, Miss Edgerton, and I'd gladly be young once more, to see the day when I might serve under the flag of 'Admiral Edgerton.' Do you know, ma'am, I'd almost fancy it was the Almighty sent His angel with us, for Master Harry's spirit certainly helped to save us all."

"Rather say it was providence over-ruling evil for good, Tim ; and pray do not make Master Henry think himself an angel when he had been doing so very wrong."

"Well, well, Miss, whichever way you like to say it ; but many's the night I've seen the angels flying over the waves, and helping them that wanted help."

"Tim's always saying, Miss," rejoined his wife, "how he's seen the angels out at sea ; I can't

say I've met with many others who ever saw them."

"I've seen them, woman, for all that," was the old man's answer, "and, leastways, there is no one can say they were not there; just gliding like on the crests of the waves, with wings as white as silver wings, as might be smoothing of the sea. Maybe you'll think next, Peggy," he added, lowering his voice, "I didn't see the ghost I was talking to you of the other day."

"Nay, man, you know best," said Mrs Heath, who looked as if the subject of ghosts was not much to her mind. Her husband's superstitious feeling about spirits in general was no new thing to his family, nor indeed to any of his comrades.

"You'd perhaps not believe it, Miss, but it was when I was a young man, on board one of the King's ships; there was one of our messmates that was drowned, and one night in my watch,—a fine moon there was, so that I could see quite distinct, you know,—I saw Joe Watt's ghost standing before me, as plainly as I see you sitting in that chair; and there's Peggy here, who wasn't there, wants to make out I was sleeping and dreaming! as if any sailor ever slept on his watch; but that's all she knows of a man-of-war."

"And what did the ghost say?" said Adela, who saw it was of no use to contradict the old man.

"That's just what always vexes me to think of, Miss, *how I lost it all*. I was just going to speak,

and ask civil like what Joe was wishing, and if I could do anything to make his mind easy, when that lubber Sam Jones sings out (he declares he didn't see anything, you see), but he sings out, 'You haven't a piece of quid in your pocket, old chap, to spare;' and with that, before I could answer, the ghost says, quite sorrowful, 'I wish I had, though,' and disappeared under a big wave. You see it was natural it should speak when spoken to, as it thought, and maybe mightn't say more than a few words; but it never came again."

"I suppose, then, it had nothing very particular to tell you, Tim, and was only paying a friendly visit," said Adela, who did not like to confess how much she inclined to the heretical view of Tim's visions; and with a promise to send George down to say when Henry was come, she took her way homewards, musing on the many causes of thankfulness they all had, and occasionally of the spirits of whose visits to the old man's watery world she had just been hearing.

Mr Edgerton, on his arrival at Plymouth, had the pleasure of finding Henry so much recovered that they were able to fix a near day for their return home, where he was most anxious to be again. His dread had been very great at the idea of meeting his father, after what had occurred; but when Mr Edgerton saw the state of weakness to which he had been reduced, he refrained from speaking on the subject, beyond an expression



of gratitude for his safety ; and he delayed till a more fitting time pointing out seriously to Henry how much he had been to blame, though the boy was so deeply conscious of his fault that severity appeared unnecessary. Rest and nursing was evidently all that were required to bring him round, and by the end of the week they reached home in safety, to Adela's great joy and satisfaction. She tenderly kissed Harry's pale and beseeching face, and at once bestowed what he felt was wanting to make him well again, her forgiveness and forgetfulness of what had passed. For some days he continued very weak, and she kept him quietly in his own room, where they came by turns to talk to and amuse him.

In the mean time, pending his complete recovery, Mr Edgerton held deep consultation with Captain Stevens as to what was the best course to pursue.

"You can't help yourself," said that gentleman; "the boy's fit for a sailor, and nothing else. Send him a voyage as middy, and when he comes back, he'll either be sick and cured of his fancies, or he'll be an out-and-out tar, that will make his way anywhere, on any wooden plank that swims."

"But it seems such a throwing away of prospects. In my own profession, there are those who would help Harry for his father's sake. I have interest at the bar, and none in the navy."

"*You'll get no good, believe me, out of that bad*

at present by keeping him on shore ; besides, you have another son for the law."

"No; I have other views for him. An uncle of mine, who has a very large iron concern in the midland counties, has promised to take George, and eventually to make over the business to him, as he has no son. The offer is far too good to be refused ; Henry was to be the barrister."

"You'll fail, Edgerton, if you will not bend to what you cannot help ; and some years hence you may find yourself the father of a Q. C. in a first-rate gown and wig, but not of a good lawyer. You can order the curls, but not the wisdom. You had better make the best of what nature has given you, a brave sailor, of whom you will be proud when he serves his country under the flag that has 'braved the battle and the breeze.'"

"You are enthusiastic, Stevens, and think that every one must get on because you did so ; but I have, as I said, no interest, and not by any means a large fortune."

"But other people may have what you have not. Now, I'll tell what, you don't want a middy for your son, that's plain, and I should like nothing better. Let Harry go to sea, and I will engage he shall not run aground in a hurry as long as I have a friend or a purse ; and I'll leave him, besides, more when I die, than, I daresay, he would ever make by his gown and wig. Is it a bargain ?"

"I suppose it must be, only I hardly like to take

advantage of such a generous offer ; and, besides, it will be very like rewarding Henry for particularly bad behaviour."

"It may be better, certainly, to say nothing to him about the plans for his going to sea just at present; he may return to school for another few months, and have time to prove his regret by steady conduct; as to the future, you need say no more. I am pleasing myself in adopting Harry, though it will be as well to tell him nothing of this, as it is good for a youth to depend on his own exertions in a profession more than on aid from others. How is he getting on, and when shall we see him among us again?"

"Very soon; he is already well enough to come down, and, I believe, is to do so to-morrow. He will be delighted if you will pay him a visit."

Harry's return to the family party was a jubilee to all. He had been absent from the merry teatable very nearly a fortnight; and only looked pale enough to be interesting on this his first appearance. He was treated like the "Prodigal;" for Adela and her father alike looked at him with the same feeling: "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found," Luke xv. 24. Even Mr Edgerton forgave his sailor boy.

It was not long before Captain Stevens called, when he heard that Henry was down stairs again. The others were out walking, and he was sitting alone at the window watching the boats, almost

all of which he knew by sight, as well as who their owners were.

"Well, Henry," said his father's friend, "have you had enough of a storm? Do you think you shall ever wish to make a second voyage?"

"I should like to make many more, if I might, sir; and was thinking of asking you to beg my father to allow me to do so."

"I might, perhaps, but for one thing; because I have been a sailor myself, and know what it is to be fond of the sea. But it would never do for a sailor to run off without leave whenever he chose."

Harry looked ashamed. "Indeed, sir, you would never find me deserting my ship."

"I cannot tell; you think not, because you wish to go to sea, and fancy you should like it. As long as you did, it would be very well; but how am I to be sure that if you changed your mind you would not be off at once? People who only stay when they are pleased, and not because it is right, are not to be depended on; and England requires sailors, Harry, who will not only follow their fancies, but do their duty."

The boy coloured. "I do not like to promise, because, as I did so wrong, you might not think anything of it if I did; but if you knew how sorry I feel, you would believe me when I say, I shall never run away again."

"I hope not," said his friend gravely, but

kindly; "and let what has happened be a lesson to you through life, to pause before doing what you very much wish, and consider if it is also *right*. Sometimes the two go together, and then we may be both safe and happy; but if right is on one side, and liking on the other, be sure no one who hesitates between the two, or who follows impulse without consideration, is to be depended on for good."

Harry was not ungrateful for the kindness with which he had been treated by all, and the danger from which he had escaped made a deep impression upon him. On the following Sunday, it was intimated that among the worshippers in God's house, were some who, having been mercifully preserved from death, desired to return thanks for the same; and many looks were directed to the spot where, among the well known faces of the crew belonging to "The Lovely Peggy," there knelt beside the rugged form of old Tim, the boyish figure, which, with those his weather-beaten companions, returned praises and thanksgiving for the late mercies which had been vouchsafed to them.

Ronald Hervey carried a full account of all that had passed to Holly Lodge, whither he soon went; and though Adela's letters had already given all the particulars, it was doubly interesting to hear them again from one who had had so active a share in the transaction. During the lieutenant's stay, he received a letter from Sam Heath, the

younger of Tim's two sons, begging for his interest in getting a berth for him on board his ship, as he was determined to give up fishing, and go to sea with the gentleman. Ronald, who knew that he was made of good stuff, did as requested, and soon had the pleasure of returning a favourable answer. The *Phoenix* having only come home with a colonial governor, was in a few weeks to return to her former station.

This time Ronald spent partly at Holly Lodge, and partly with his brother. If one thing surprised him more than another, it was to find the improved state of things at his mother's. There was seldom now a word of difference between herself and her companion, and he beheld Eleanor patiently playing at whist, with an attention and skill he had never supposed it possible for her to attain. Altogether he reported at the Rectory that "fair weather had set in at Holly Lodge."

There was, however, grief in store for the Herveys; and before the end of another year, Mrs Hervey mourned for the loss of her gentle daughter-in-law, who sunk under a few days severe illness, which she had no strength to bear. Mr Hervey brought his little motherless girl to Holly Lodge, as a better place for her than the lonely Rectory; and the old lady was glad to have her only grandchild under her roof. Her house, therefore, became Amy's home, the child accommodating herself to the change with the facility of

her age, and she was soon perfectly happy with "grandmamma," "dear Fox," and "Aunt Eleanor," who a year ago would have thought the trouble imposed upon her by the presence of a child not to be borne. That time, however, had gone past; she was daily seeking more and more for strength to fulfil her duties with all humility and love, and the result was apparent in her own increasing peace and quietude, and in the sunshine she was beginning to throw round Mrs Hervey's existence. Her heart warmed towards the little girl as she remembered how the same lot had once been her own; and as the tiny hand clasped hers, she became aware that, for a time at least, a greater matter than she had yet been entrusted with was committed to her charge, and she made it an unceasing prayer that she might not again be found unworthy.

Her days were now fully occupied. She had given her attention to the housekeeping difficulties with success, and domestic affairs always engaged her for a while after breakfast, at which she presided. A couple of hours were then given to writing any letters Mrs Hervey made over to her, hearing Amy read, and doing anything that seemed to claim immediate attention. She now made it a rule, if fine, to walk with the child an hour before her dinner, instead of sending her out twice with the servant. After luncheon came a drive with the old lady, and on their return, she generally had

a little time to herself before dinner, which, with an hour secured in the morning by early rising, was all she allowed herself to consider her own. After dinner there was play, talk, and work, till Amy went to bed, and then Eleanor generally read aloud, which she did both easily and well. From these evening readings she learnt much, as Mrs Hervey, who was clever and well-informed, had always many remarks to make. When need was, she played at whist, and occasionally their solitude was enlivened by really agreeable friends. Eleanor had long ceased to reckon days and weeks, or to consider herself unhappy, and she was particularly pleased at having succeeded in getting her bills and house accounts quite under control. The results had been made manifest whilst Mr Hervey was staying with them at Christmas. He was raising a subscription for enlarging his schools, and one day, when stating particulars, Eleanor produced rather a considerable sum to be applied for that purpose.

"It is not mine," said she, "it is Mrs Hervey's money which I was desired to give."

"I assure you" said his mother, in answer to her son's look, "I do not consider it mine at all; it was quite Eleanor's to bestow as she likes."

"What am I to understand?" said Mr Hervey, "the money belongs to no one, and is there; I give up, will any one solve the riddle?"

"Simply, Mr Hervey," said Eleanor, "we have



managed the cook, and therefore the housekeeping is less expensive."

"Oh you have been retrenching."

"Not at all. I hope you have not been starved since you came? We have the same as usual, but it costs less; we have only managed better, as you once advised me to do."

"I remember; and was the kitchen queen very hard to deal with at first?"

"Rather so, and I confess I was much afraid of her; but armed with full powers, I one day appeared in her territory, and made known my intention of doing so every morning."

"I should like to have witnessed your intrepidity. What did the lady say?"

"That she had never in her life been accustomed to such a thing, and that if we thought she had been stealing she had better go at once. But Mrs Hervey had told me what to say, that of course she could go or stay as she liked; but I was following her mistress' directions, and should continue to do so. My being there was no reflection on her honesty, and that only those who had anything to conceal objected to receiving their orders in the right place. So finding there was no help for it, she submitted, though she was very sullen for some days."

"And did you find her out in dishonesty?"

"No, not actual dishonesty, but great waste, and a very *unthrifty* way of going on. But with

the new plans, the bills were always very much less every week, though we keep the same kind of table as before ; and half the sum was on the book of cook's sundries, which I had never been able to understand."

"Then this is some of the money?"

"Yes; Mrs Hervey told me to put all saved into a purse for charitable purposes, which I might employ as it was wanted. You see the gift is not mine."

"At least," said he, "a present between you; I really congratulate you on the conquest of so formidable a person as Mrs Cook, and myself also on getting so much to help my schools."

One of Eleanor's greatest pleasures at this time, and indeed ever after, was hearing from and writing to her brother. Changes had taken place in his life; he had been obliged to take a long holiday to recruit his health, which had suffered from over-work, and he had made use of the time, to seek out his old friend Edward Vernon, with whom he spent many months, gaining health without being quite idle. He was now on the point of returning with renewed strength; but to a different field of usefulness, and accompanied by a wife, with whom he hoped to make a home in his new sphere of labour. Eleanor judged from her sister's letters that she was fitted to make John happy, which was quite enough to ensure her love and affection for the relative she seemed to have so

little chance of knowing except by name. And so time wore on. Mrs Hervey never talked now of changing her companion, who on her side did not perceive the additional wrinkles which furrowed the old lady's brow.

When Amy had been with them about fifteen months, they paid a visit to the rectory, and Adela and Eleanor met for the first time since the latter had gone to live with Mrs Hervey. The weeks thus spent together afforded unspeakable pleasure, and there was much to tell of the past which could not be conveyed by letter. The current of Eleanor's life was each year becoming more tranquil and happy, and with the Edgertons the time had passed without any very marked event, save that Harry was gone on his second voyage, and wrote word he was "quite jolly." The little girls were growing rapidly out of children into womanhood, and there was already a talk of the time when George should go to his uncle's.

Young Mrs Hervey was indeed missed at the rectory; but still having both Eleanor and Amy with her, prevented much of the sadness which the visit would otherwise have had for the old lady; and when the world saw the whole party together, it looked wise, and said, how easy it was to foresee that in due time Mr Hervey would marry his mother's handsome companion. The world is sometimes right; but is also, as in this case, *frequently wrong*. When winter drew near, Mrs

Hervey began to long for her own fireside, and they returned home to resume the quiet life which had become habitual to all. Mr Hervey came occasionally to see his mother and little girl, and his visits were always a pleasure to Eleanor, to whom he had shewn himself so true a friend.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### How much Owest Thou to thy Lord?

"A man's mind is sometimes wont to tell him more than seven watchmen that sit above in a high tower."—ECCLESIASTICUS xxxvii. 14.

AS Amy grew older, she became more and more of a companion to Eleanor; and many days when her grandmother could not go out, they used to take long walks together. These were enjoyed by both; and were often into Hastings either for business or pleasure. They had been there one day, and were just returning home, when Eleanor remembered that Mrs Hervey had expressed a wish to have a particular kind of wool for her knitting, which was to be had at a library, with which was combined a department for working materials, and a sort of fancy repository. Thither they went; but the woman was busy attending to some customers who were not easily suited, and they had to wait for some time, during which Eleanor *looked at the different articles lying about the shop.*

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Some drawings on the counter attracted her attention from an air of familiarity about them, for which she could only account by supposing they had been copied from the same originals that she had once employed; but on looking closer she was convinced that not only had she seen them before, but that they were some of her own, and stooping down she soon detected the E. H. which she was in the habit of putting to her water-colour sketches. There was no doubt they were hers, and she knew both Mrs Harcourt and Juliana had some in their possession; but how came they there? The mistress of the shop, in reply to the inquiry made, said they had been brought by a young girl, who was a stranger to her, and had asked permission to leave them, in the hopes of their being sold, giving an address, but no name. As she seemed very anxious about it, the woman had consented to let them remain on commission, and the girl had said she would call again. The price fixed was very small, and Eleanor bought the two without any remark as to having seen them before; and with Amy carrying the wool, they returned home. The child was surprised that aunt Eleanor was so silent all the way; she did not know the mysterious influence which the paper parcel in her hand exerted over her.

Her first feeling had been one of indignation *that* the drawings should have been so little prized *by* those to whom they belonged; but the more

she reflected, the more she became aware of the self-pride which was governing her thoughts in defiance of her better sense. The few shillings asked had evidently been an object of anxiety to those who offered the sketches for sale, and she could not conceal the inference that arose, of Mrs Harcourt and Juliana's being in Hastings, and what was more, in distress. She had heard nothing of them since leaving London; it was probably the same with them regarding what had become of herself, and they could have no idea of her being anywhere in the neighbourhood, or better off than themselves. With the latter consideration the old spirit arose, and dwelt with pleasure on it. They could not know that she had suspected their requiring help, and would not look for it from her. When she had been left without knowing where to turn, there had been, she understood, a sufficiency for them which she had not shared in. It could be no business of hers to inquire into their present circumstances, and as it was, she had helped them by buying the drawings. No wonder Amy thought her companion silent, for she scarcely spoke till they reached the gate of Holly Lodge.

She had considered the subject dismissed, but this was far from being the case. In old times it would have been easy to think no more about it; but the day when the evil spirit reigned undisturbed was past, and the thought perpetually *recurred, as she looked round on the comforts she*

still enjoyed, that there were some claiming relationship with her, in distress, she could not doubt, it might be in actual poverty. Then again arose the question, Could she help them? She had not much to give away, and tried to convince herself it was not incumbent on her to offer relief, which would be at best considered small, and was not asked for. If it was not a duty, how was it that her mind could not return to its rest? How was it that at night her prayers seemed to have lost their usual fervency?

A little book, with daily texts, given her by Mrs Hervey lay on her dressing table, and the morning after her walk into Hastings, of which we have been speaking, she took it up as was her custom before leaving her room; and at the day of the month to which she turned, found these words:—

“I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee.”—MATTHEW xviii. 32, 33.

There was food for thought, and Eleanor still stood with the book in her hand, when she was roused by the arrival of Amy and Fox, to inquire whether she was coming down, as Mrs Hervey was ready for breakfast, and waiting for her. She went at once and fulfilled her morning duties, with the cheerfulness and animation natural to her; and when they were finished, there being no letters to write, she asked Mrs Hervey to spare her for the rest of the morning, as she wished to go into



Hastings, and make inquiries after an acquaintance, who she thought was there. The old lady begged her to take the carriage; but Eleanor had more than one reason for declining, and said she hoped to be back in time for the afternoon drive.

Amy and her four-footed friend were surprised to find they were to stay at home, and play in the garden instead of walking. The arrangement did not please them, and the pair gazed disconsolately through the gate at "aunt Eleanor" walking briskly off, whilst they were left behind to amuse themselves as they could.

Excitement of mind added such activity to Eleanor's step, that Hastings was reached in a much shorter time than usual. She went first to the library to ask for the address given by the girl, who had, it appeared, called after she had left, and expressed great pleasure at finding that the drawings had been sold. Having obtained the necessary information, she set out on her search, which led to a small house, in a back part of the town, where she had seldom been. A baker's shop occupied the lower part, and Eleanor inquired of the woman standing behind the counter, if any one of the name of Harcourt lived there?

The person thus addressed looked curiously at her, as though wondering what her business might be, and replied, that two ladies, her lodgers on the first floor, must be the people asked for. Eleanor *inquired if they had been there long?* "Only

about a fortnight," was the answer, they seemed very poor, and the elder of the two seldom went out. If the lady would walk up, and knock at the door facing her, she would find them both within.

Ascending as desired the little wooden staircase which creaked under her weight, she knocked and waited for some minutes before any one answered. The door was then opened by a young girl, who at once exclaimed, "Eleanor!" It was indeed Juliana, no longer the child that we first knew her. She at least had had no share in any bitterness or unkindness of the past, and turning round to look into the room, she said cheerfully, "Mama, after all, here is Eleanor come to see us."

"Who?" answered a well-known voice. "I do not want to see any one, Juliana; do not let her come in, I am ill, and cannot be disturbed;" But Eleanor had by this time entered; she feared if she listened longer, her good feelings and intentions might vanish, and she now advanced, forcing herself to say kindly,

"Not too ill, I hope, to see such an old acquaintance; surely, Mrs Harcourt, you will admit Eleanor;" and without noticing the ungracious manner in which she was received, she took the seat offered her by Juliana, who was evidently distressed, and really glad to see her, although meeting again in such altered circumstances."

The room was very small, and the furniture both scanty and dirty; a door half opened afforded

a view into an adjoining one, which was smaller still, only just holding the bed, and what was absolutely required. The appearance of everything was miserable, and Eleanor could hardly believe that it was the Mrs Harcourt she had known, who sat before a wretched fire in a shawl and dress as old and faded as they could well be. It was painful to hear her angry replies as Eleanor kindly tried to lead the conversation, by telling Juliana she had only heard the day before of their being in the place, or she should have come to see them sooner.

"I'm sure I wonder you take the trouble," chimed in Mrs Harcourt, "now we are so much reduced, as you see; but you at least seem not to have wanted, and to have found more friends than I have."

Eleanor's brow flushed, but she answered gently, "I have not been without meeting some friends, Mrs Harcourt, as you suppose; but, except having paid them a visit once for some weeks, I have been earning my bread ever since we parted in London."

"Indeed! But it does not seem very hard work at all events. I wish my troubles had ended as well as yours. And may I ask what business affords such comfortable looks?"

Thus challenged, Eleanor stated where she was living, and in what capacity, merely withholding the amount of salary, which she thought concerned only herself. From Mrs Harcourt's history she gathered that the greater part of the money for

her use, having been in her own power, she had squandered it away in the first few years of her misfortune, in all sorts of folly, and what she called "keeping up appearances." Of course it was soon gone ; she had no friends who cared enough about her to attempt to save her, and she had gradually dragged her child down with her to the condition in which Eleanor saw them. What was left barely provided the necessary wants of life, and she was loud in her lamentations over the unkindness of friends, and what she termed her own ill-luck, and Eleanor's superior good fortune. None of the kindly remarks made by the latter had any effect in soothing her unhappy state of mind. "She hadn't asked for help, she wasn't going to take any from Eleanor ;" but her mood melted a little when she looked at Juliana. If anything could be done for her, she would not refuse a kindness for her child, who seemed the only side that gave any opening for hope ; and Eleanor finding her presence did no good, asked her young cousin if she would like to take a little walk with her. She rejoiced to see the beam of pleasure which the proposal brought to the pale and unhappy face, which had been looking wistfully at her whilst her mother was talking, and they went away together, with a promise that Juliana should not be absent too long.

It was surprising, considering the influences amid which her childhood had been spent, that

the young girl had grown up with any good in her. Where she had got it was a marvel, but it was there, and there was in her much which might well have repaid care such as she had never known. Since her father's death, her lot had been an unhappy one, and latterly really destitute; "and yet I think, Eleanor," said she, "if mamma would let me, I could make things a little better, but she always says I know nothing, and am only a child; but I see younger girls than I am earning their bread, and do you think you could tell me any way of doing so? The worst is, I know so little, but I could try."

"We will consider, dear, and see what can be done; I should like to help you, if I could, and to see you looking a little better and stronger."

"Oh that is nothing, I believe it is only the different way we live in now." She did not say that sometimes they had hardly enough to eat. "I never knew till to-day, Eleanor, that you had lost all your money, but I thought if you knew where we were, you would come and see us; mamma said not, but I didn't believe her, and you see I was right." Eleanor, however, felt ashamed to think that there had been a very long period during which Mrs Harcourt would not have been mistaken.

Before the walk was over Juliana was full of hope and zeal to exert herself, if only shewn how; and as Eleanor looked at her pale cheeks, and her

old dress and bonnet, she felt that in her greatest desolation she had been less to be pitied than the young being who stood beside her. Leaving her at the door of the lodging, and promising to come again, she set out on her return home.

The matter of help, such as she could give, was a subject for serious consideration. It appeared as if little could be done for the mother, and to save and raise the child was evidently the chief end to be attained. Eleanor revolved more than one scheme in her mind by which this might be accomplished, and that should benefit both at the same time. She related what had happened to Mrs Hervey, that she might seek counsel and advice from her experience, and the old lady entered with interest into her plans. It was agreed that the most effectual assistance for the present would be to place Juliana where she could be prepared to go out as a governess, when old enough. Eleanor had never spent her salary, and had more than half laid by, besides the money she brought with her, which was untouched. Her dress had cost little, from her wardrobe having been so expensively stocked at the outset; and latterly, Mrs Hervey had been in the habit of making her constant presents, to enable her, she said, to save, and have a fortune when she might wish to marry. She thought she could manage a couple of years at least, and Juliana's clothes might be made to cost very little. Eleanor was

becoming a good manager now, and though so much time had been lost, yet she knew the girl was in earnest, and would make the most of the advantages afforded her. In two years she would be eighteen, at least able to undertake the duties of a nursery governess, and perhaps it might be possible then to do even more for her. What at present had to maintain two, could, if Juliana were entirely removed, be applied for Mrs Harcourt's use; and the day might come when her daughter could render her further assistance. Eleanor entered fully into her projects to Mrs Hervey, who had but one alteration to make: she would not allow Eleanor to undertake so much, on means she earned herself, and insisted on paying half the expense, whatever it might be; and that Juliana's holidays should always be spent with them. To the thanks expressed for such generosity she replied, that she was glad to mark her sense of the kind attention which surrounded her old age, and the infancy of her grandchild; and all she wished was to have the arrangements made as soon as possible, and to see Juliana. Eleanor therefore made another visit to Hastings the next day, and was rewarded by seeing her cousin's joy at what was proposed for her. Mrs Harcourt accepted it as graciously as was in her nature, but allowed Juliana to return to Holly Lodge, and she never remembered spending such a pleasant afternoon. In spite of all disadvantages, she

made a favourable impression on Mrs Hervey; Eleanor was afterwards often sent to bring her; and it was one of her employments now to set her wardrobe to rights. After a few weeks Juliana remained entirely with them, though they often went over to see her mother, who was able to be more comfortable, having one to provide for only. There was fortunately about a hundred a-year, the principal of which she could not touch, and which would keep her from want; comfortable or happy it was beyond any one's power to make her, and she indulged herself fully in the luxury of grumbling, a fresh theme for which she found in the idea of her dear child going out as a governess; she could not help herself, but was not going to be thankful for such a fate. Eleanor had never been so truly great as when in that little miserable room she bore with the ill temper, and smoothed the petulance, of the unhappy woman whose ill-treatment of herself had been quite forgiven, and whom she sought only to befriend. The hour of which she had so often idly dreamt was come, and in its presence she was the most unconscious of it.

But if Mrs Harcourt was wanting in gratitude, Juliana had enough for both. Grieved at her mother's conduct, of which she never spoke, it was evident she desired to shew feeling for the two, and would have kissed the hem of her cousin's skirt if allowed. She improved in health and spirits rapidly; and when placed, soon after mid-



summer, at a thoroughly good school, all parties hoped much for the result of the measures taken. Mrs Harcourt was to remain where she was, because she should thus see Juliana in the holidays, and Eleanor persevered in the ungracious task of visiting her, though it frequently appeared little pleasure to either side. She always refrained from taking Amy on these occasions, not liking her to hear such continued discontent and complaining as she generally had to listen to. Still she felt it was her duty to go; and many small comforts found their way to the little baker's lodging, of which she and Mrs Hervey could have given an account.

Adela's pleasure and thankfulness on hearing what had happened may be imagined, when she remembered the first day they drove out in the pony carriage together. She related the conversation to Mrs Hervey, saying, as she did so,

"Eleanor will have her crown yet; and the first twig she so longed to see, will be a noble-hearted revenge."

Her interest was quite as warm as Mrs Hervey's, and she and her father would gladly have helped in the good work, but were told it was perfectly unnecessary, and that they had better keep their money for something else. This was a memorable year to Eleanor. The good seed was bringing forth ten, yea, twenty fold. She had "ruled" her own "*spirit*," and, at the same time, purchased a

heart that was all her own. Each day she felt more grateful for the providence which had ordered all events in her life; and time passed on without any further change than that of making them all older,—Mrs Hervey, Eleanor, Amy, and Fox, there was no exception. Ronald, too, now and then paid them a visit; and he and his little niece in their games of play made Holly Lodge re-echo with sounds it had never heard when Eleanor and Mrs Hervey lived alone.

Eleanor's health had on the whole been very good, but during one of these visits from Ronald, she caught a violent cold, which left behind it so much weakness, that change of air was recommended. Adela at once wrote to beg she would come to them, and knowing she would not like to leave her post unfilled, proposed that one of her party should take her place. Charlotte would willingly do so, and would carefully study every wish of Mrs Hervey's. The old lady quite came into the plan, and Eleanor, who felt she needed a change, gladly accepted the offer. Amy was to go with her, that she might see her father; and at the end of a week Charlotte arrived at the Lodge, while Eleanor, with her little charge, went to Redleigh, where she had not been for many years.

The time that had passed during her absence was more marked there than in her own home; even "the singing bird" was now a tall girl of seventeen, the other two quite young women.

"Look at my children," said Adela. "How old I must be, Eleanor; do you not see wrinkles and grey hairs?" And the person addressed begs she will not unpleasantly remind her that they shall have to begin spectacles together.

Miss Flyn, now that her work at the Edgertons was accomplished, had gone to reside with a widowed sister, but was often to come to them, having been too faithful a friend to lose sight of; George was learning business in earnest at his uncle's; Henry just then at sea; Amy was a favourite with all; and Adela and Eleanor were happy in being together again, hearing and telling all their respective news.

Eleanor, however, still regularly taught Amy, and walked out with her every day. Adela observed that, more than once when they happened to go alone, Mr Hervey had met them, and accompanied them home; but she knew too well how many topics of interest there must be between them to feel surprised. One day, however, their conversation in the garden, while Amy was playing at some distance, was so long and earnest, that Adela began to think something unusual must be passing, and to feel a small, a very small, amount of curiosity. Eleanor came in looking exceedingly calm and composed, and merely remarked that she "had had a long walk in the garden with Mr Hervey." Adela thought she *need not have told her* what she already knew so

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well ; but she would not allow herself to be cross, so she answered gently that she had seen as much.

"Yes," said Eleanor, beginning to untie her bonnet and take off her gloves, as if by way of doing something. "What a good man Mr Hervey is ; I really feel quite sorry for him."

"He is a truly good man, Eleanor ; but what has happened, anything new ?"

"Oh no, nothing new. He was only telling me how dull the rectory was ; and that he should like to have Amy back again, only he did not know how to manage it. Would you have believed it is nearly five years since her mother's death ?"

It was getting dusk, it might be the fading light, or was Adela paler than usual ? But she spoke at once :

"I understand ; and he has asked you to see what you can do to help him in the difficulty."

"Yes ; but, Adela," she exclaimed, suddenly looking at her, "what is the matter ? No ; you do not understand at all, I see ;" and going up to her, she laid her hand on her shoulder. "It is your opinion, not mine, that Mr Hervey wants on the subject, and I was only commissioned to say, he should come and talk to you about it himself to-morrow, if you do not forbid him. It will not be his first visit here on business."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### Changes and Chances of this Mortal Life.

"If loving hearts were never lonely,  
If all they wish might always be,  
Accepting what they look for only,  
They might be glad—but not in Thee."

—ANON.

WE have already remarked that we do not seek to chronicle the minutiae of each day, nor to dwell on every event, but only to open the book of life's history, wherever a brighter light than usual shall illuminate, or a cloud cast a shadow on its page. Therefore we beg our readers to imagine whether Mr Hervey ever paid his intended visit or not, and while well acquainted with the facts, shall make no record of them here. In the progress of our story, we have met with much that is pleasant and good, something of the reverse, and also of the sad. We will have a change. Come with us to the fresh country this bright spring morning; we will lead you to old haunts, to gaze on familiar faces, for there is a wedding at Redleigh, and we *must be there*.

Let us stand at the church door, with the young and the old who are gathered together, for the village takes holiday to-day, to do honour to the pale bride. She is coming, and every heart throws a welcome on her path, with the flowers her school children are strewing before her. The blessing of many that were ready to perish is upon her head; and the widow's heart sings for joy to behold her; and we who have known her in the home she has so long brightened and sanctified by her maidenly purity, could almost regret to think she is to leave it at last. And thus she passes on, with her sister train behind her, till they stand before the altar; and we too will follow into the old church, and listen to the solemn words that shall be spoken, and the vows pledged which death only may sever, and Alfred Hervey and Adela Edgerton shall be made one.

And the merry bells shall peal out from the grey tower with its ivy mantle, and the bright sun shall be shining on this morning of merry May, and the good and the true shall go forth together, and we shall keep one dried leaf from our bouquet (it is a secret who gave it to us), in memory of her we once knew, and shall see no more, the gentle and the loving Adela Edgerton.

Many things shall this morning bring to pass. Sunshine shall come back to the Rectory, Amy shall have a mother again; the poor and the desolate find there a well-known friend. Ronald shall think the youngest bridesmaid looks very pretty,

and wonder if she would make a good sailor's wife: and Mrs Hervey and Eleanor go on their way rejoicing; but they will never come again together to the old Rectory at Redleigh.

For the weight of more than threescore years and ten is on the old lady; she is seventy-six, and her children come and see her, now that in the evening of her life she goes no more forth from her home. And watched and guarded by an unwearying love, her days draw to a close, as the setting of the summer sun which has run his course, and goes down mantled alike with beauty and peace; till, like the full ear of corn garnered in its rich maturity, Mrs Hervey passes to her appointed change.

But Eleanor is not alone in her labours of love. Adela and her husband are often there; the old lady cannot tell which of her two daughters she loves most dearly, and her blessing as she departs rests upon them both. At her own request, her grave is made by that of Amy's mother, and side by side the two lie, together awaiting the day when the "mortal shall have put on immortality." Her children are once more at their own home, and Eleanor their sister is with them, and converses earnestly with Adela by the Rector's fireside.

Look at them now as they sit together. It is many years since we first saw them in like fellowship. What marks has old Time laid upon their brow? The days of their early youth are gone, *but there are as yet* no symptoms of decline. The

those we then marked are in their prime: what they were, they still are the clinging vine, and the oak in its self-sustaining rigour.

Perhaps there is less of change about Aelia Harper. Her soul has never been compass-crossed, but has lived safely in a secure abiding place. The people here and there are the same that for so many years have ruled by love those who were committed to her care: but a stranger boy nestles in her love and a new tribe already begins to turn attention his way.

And Elvira is people her the same, and yet not the same. There is the majestic carriage of those whose voice quickly over with years of maturity, the same dark bright eye, the same black hair flowing in waves about the well-shaped head. But she has yet changed. There has come a deepened quiet to the laughing way, a depth of feeling to the shining eye, a maturity of soul to the joyful spirit, a careless spell to the white bright hair which long before wore and wore of the golden change from the pure gold which has been used in the temple.

The Harpers have been in home some weeks, spent by Elvira in nursing and rearing her strength, slowly used to just nursing and watching. She sits in the little room which was long ago sent to Elvira and with a light of love and joyous desire her hands move to business: but it does not appear anything to Elvira. — Why



cannot it be put off until Eleanor is quite well again. There is surely no need for hurry."

She has heard something about a dividend having been paid to the creditors of Harcourt and Deane, and though not acquainted with the particulars, she knows Eleanor will not have to go out as a companion again, and has made up her mind she will stay at the Rectory with them. Business, therefore, may be left for a future day, and she says as much.

But Eleanor shakes her head. "You have a great deal to hear, Adela, and may as well listen whilst we have time and opportunity. I have not told you much that has happened during the last twelvemonth. And to begin with what you will like, I am no longer very poor."

"I heard something about it, and it was that very thing which made me say, there was no need to think of business at present."

"I must though, and get you to help me too; so prepare for the budget to which you are condemned, all brought down for your special benefit. First, here are Mr Deane's letters to me. The bankrupts have paid ten shillings in the pound, which closes the account; there will be no more."

"That then is about half what you lost."

"Nearly half; there is not quite the ten shillings. I have less than before, but many a family is brought up with no more; it will give me rather over four hundred a year. Adela, I feel really very rich again."

“ Yes, it is what will make you comfortable, and you can now live with us without feeling under any obligation by doing so.”

“ We shall see ; I am not come to that yet. Then about Juliana ; you are aware she remained another year at school—three altogether. It seemed desirable to give her the extra time, and with Mrs Hervey’s kind help I was able to do it. She had great advantages, and has quite repaid what was done for her, giving every promise of being sensible and useful. I got her a nice situation as governess in a family, living not far from Hastings. They will, I hope, be kind to her ; and the two little girls, who are both young, will be quite within her compass.”

“ I was sorry when we had heard you settled that Juliana should go to the Moores, for I should have liked to have had her here for Amy.”

“ Thank you, but if you will still shew my child kindness, I shall be equally obliged, and she will not be quite unprovided for. I am going to settle a hundred a year on her ; but shall recommend that whilst able she should earn for herself, and apply the income to make her mother more comfortable. It would be of no use to give Mrs Harcourt money, but Juliana is a good girl ; and, then, if she is ill or unemployed, there will be something to stand between her and want.”

“ And you intend to do this in addition to what you have already done ! Eleanor, it is too much.”

“ I cannot think so, Adela, and all the necessary arrangements are made. My next question is, Do you know of old Mrs Hervey’s handsome legacy to me ?”

“ Yes, I heard of it before we left Holly Lodge.”

“ It was very generous of her, but was too much. My salary was very high, besides what she paid for Juliana, and the presents she made me. I sometimes fancy her sons may think the money ought to be theirs.”

“ They do not, I can tell you. I have heard both Alfred and Ronald speak on the subject, and they agree you deserved it all ; and that nothing could ever repay your care and love to their mother during the last years of her life. Besides, it did not go out of the family. They have long considered you as I do, a sister.”

“ It is most kind. Adela, when I look back, I often think how fortunate I was to lose my money ; I cannot be too thankful. With the exception of my brother and one friend, both far off, I was, you may say, a forlorn creature in life ; and what seemed my greatest misfortune gave me a sister in you, a protector in your father, a mother in Mrs Hervey, brothers in her sons, and lastly, a child in Juliana, besides the true riches which I before despised. Surely ‘ goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.’ ”

“ But,” she resumed after a moment’s silence, “ *I have not finished yet.* I have bought an an-

ment to the post should consider me fitted for it. I have offered my services in the proper quarter; and one recommendation will be, that I can afford to work without pay, having sufficient means of my own."

"And you never told me of all this."

"Because I knew it was no use to consult you on a subject to which you would never have agreed, and your arguments might have influenced me more than I wished."

But Adela could not answer.

"My more than sister," said Eleanor, taking her hand, and struggling to speak cheerfully, "you must help me better than this to bear what is before me; for you do not suppose I can leave you all without suffering. But counting the cost calmly and deliberately, I offer the sacrifice to the Master whom I would seek to serve, and to whom I owe so much; and follow humbly in the path in which He appears to be calling me for that service, leaving the result in his hands. Adela, you would not have me a backward servant, you who first brought me to the gate of my Lord's vineyard."

"I would not; but you are far before me now."

"Not so. I must be your pupil still in continuance in well-doing, and enduring love. If you were in my place, you would do the same."

"You always have had the most strength to stand alone, though," replied Mrs Hervey.

"And what would it have led to, what did it

lead to, but wilfulness and pride ? till I was obliged to bend to a Power I could not withstand ; and not till you pointed me to the Rock which had proved already your sure foundation, and I had surrendered my own boasted strength, was I able to stand at all. Adela, you have escaped the agony of the strong and rebellious will, that would not, and yet must, be conquered. My day has been different to yours, and has needed perhaps more of the self-relying spirit, which so nearly proved my greatest bane."

"I wish I could look more willingly on your determination, or at all events that the climate was better. What a pity John and his friend did not go out together."

"I have often thought what a trial it must be to them to be so widely separated for life ; but they allowed no selfish feeling to interfere with what seemed best. John has, however, stood the climate which has killed so many for a great number of years, and if one of the family has escaped, why not another ? After the parting with all here is over, I shall be able to feel myself on the road to another home, which very much lightens the undertaking. It is not every one who goes out with such good prospects, and I want you to look on the bright instead of the dark side of things. You will do so, I feel sure, before the time comes ; and now you know why I ask you to befriend Juliana, if she be ill or in trouble."

"She shall never want a friend, you may be sure, whilst I am here; and when she is allowed a holiday, she must spend it with us. If she is ill, we shall send for her, of course."

"Thank you. It is my only anxiety," and Eleanor carefully turned the conversation to other subjects, that Adela might not dwell upon her plan till it had become more familiar to her mind.

But though thus laid aside for the moment, she did not avoid a mention of it in their daily intercourse as a thing that was to be. Every point was discussed in their quiet family party. Eleanor was ready to weigh all reasons, for and against, but it was with her no sudden blaze of enthusiasm, but a steadfast, sober determination to go, because work which wanted doing had been offered to her, who seemed for many reasons the person suited for it. And Adela herself, when the surprise was past, was ready to be the first in bidding her good speed, in the path which many years ago she would have rejoiced to have chosen for herself.

Those who had to seek for a fitting person to send, in answer to the application made for help, found it no easy matter to meet with such a one, and rejoiced at receiving Miss Harcourt's communication. To all inquiries made respecting her, most satisfactory information was obtained. Obligated by reverse of fortune to depend on her own exertions, she was known to have done so in a courageous and independent spirit, and to have

made the last years of the lady with whom her lot had been cast years of peaceful happiness. There had been abundant proof of the sincerity of her Christian profession ; and she now offered herself without any pressure of means, and with all the talents with which she was so richly endowed. In addition to this, she was the sister of one who had long been a devoted labourer in the same cause, and whose house might afford her a home, whilst employed in that which she undertook to do for love, and not for hire. The instrument needed had been prepared for the work, and at the fitting moment given for the want required ; Eleanor's letter met with a cordial response, and a time was proposed at which she might, if it were agreeable to her, proceed to her destination. She had no wish to delay ; and her preparations were at once arranged, that she might be ready for the opportunity that offered. She would not be lonely ; for two other missionaries with their wives were returning, and with them she would stay until able to join her brother. The remaining weeks were spent in final, and yet cheerful communion, with the friends she had so long loved ; and though the separation could not but be painful, each contributed their sacrifice of self-restraint, to lighten as much as possible the sorrow of which it could not be divested.

The last evening of Eleanor's stay at Redleigh was one of the mellow autumn seasons, before a

lingering summer has quite departed. Adela, who had been occupied elsewhere, found her on returning in the verandah, into which the long windows of the sitting-room opened, busily engaged, with Amy and Fox for companions, in training a small plant against the green trellis-work. Her task appeared just completed.

"Adela," said she, "I have planted a slip of the foreign rose at Holly Lodge against the verandah, which it will soon creep over, and cover with its profusion of flowers, for it loves a warm aspect. It will remind you, when I am away, of your sister; of one who came to your home unhappy and proud, but goes forth from it in humble thankfulness."

"Sit down here," she added, for Adela was struggling with her tears. "When I come back again, we shall sit by the shade of the slip I have planted, and I know of no rose whose flowers are so beautiful." She had drawn her companion, as she spoke, to a little seat that stood under the verandah, and placing herself beside her, Amy and her four-footed companion nestled at her feet.

"I have still something to say, Adela; some more business, and, I fear, rather troublesome. It is about poor Fox."

"We will take care of him; he shall always stay at Redleigh, till you come to claim him again."

"Poor fellow! he will be very old then. I should like to have taken him, only his long coat would



be a burden to him in a hot climate, so he must stay, if allowed. Only," she continued, curling his white hair round her fingers, "poor Fox has been such a spoilt pet, that he likes nothing but his own way, and it is a very ungracious one too, sometimes, and not every one can put up with it."

"But, Aunt Eleanor," said Amy, "if mamma will let me, I will take care of Fox till you come back. As we are old friends, he will follow me; and I shall not mind his being cross sometimes."

"It will be the best way," rejoined Adela, looking down at the pair; "let him be Amy's dog whilst you are gone. She understands his humours, and he will be a favourite with every one if he likes. No one shall harm one of Fox's hairs here."

And so it was arranged, and Amy made an attempt that night to convince Fox that he was her dog; but though not uncivilly received, she had no chance of success as long as Eleanor was still in his sight.

Yet another day, and nothing remained but to say farewell! Those who have ever been parted from the objects they love, know what it was. The Herveys did not lose sight of the departing one, till the ship, casting off her moorings, stood on her outward way. Eleanor gazed wistfully from the deck, till the well known forms could no longer be distinguished; and when the outlines of her native country began to fade, she sought in the solitude of her cabin relief for the feelings which

threatened to gain the mastery. Those who were going forth went not without cheering words of comfort and strength from many who remained behind, and her thoughts dwelt on the valedictory dismissal addressed to herself in common with her missionary companions.\*

“We do not want to excite any spurious or transient feeling, to stir up romance, or mere enthusiasm, but to have men who, after counting the cost, shall in love for perishing souls be willing to go forth. Let the nature of the work be thoroughly known, the obstacles, and perils, and discouragements, as well as the duty and the reward, and then let the soldier of Christ enlist in this noble army. For this nothing will avail but the religion of the cross; from it alone can come the living zeal, and living love, and living faith, which should mark and qualify the genuine missionary of the Redeemer’s Kingdom.†

“And the committee must address a few words to their missionary sisters whom they see before them. We welcome you as the noble followers of those holy women of old who laboured with Paul and the other apostles in the Gospel. We may

\* It will be perceived that the following contains portions of more than one address, delivered at a later period. They have been adopted and combined in this place, as containing sentiments applicable at all times to the great work of which they treat.

† Church Missionary Intelligencer, January 1853.

suppose that even in that day the names of such women were sometimes cast out among their companions as extravagant enthusiasts, else why should St Paul have encouraged them by the very remarkable assurance, 'whose names were written in the book of life?' The committee do not hesitate to address you in the same spirit. For no worldly prospects can float before the eyes of the least candid critic. No motive can sustain the mind of her who goes forth, but the love of Christ. Conjugal affection, and all the tenderest sympathies of the female character, must be sanctified by that faith which out of weakness made strong the women of old.\*

"There is a great work before you in the promotion of female education; for remember that a Christian church must have its roots in the hearts of Christian mothers. God may give you a few illustrious examples of mature Christianity in your adult converts; but the mass will be far below that standard, until you have a generation nursed in the lap of Christian mothers, and taught to lisp the name of Christ.

"And the committee commend you, dear sisters, to the unseen but almighty arm of that Saviour, who on earth permitted certain honourable women to minister unto Him, and who appeared first after His resurrection to comfort them. We speak by

\* Church Missionary Intelligencer, December 1852.

faith, and not by sight, when we assure you 'that as the day is, so shall your strength be,' and that you will be no real losers by the sacrifice you are now about to make of all the comforts and social advantages of a happy English home. Christ's presence in Africa will more than recompense you, and we shall not fail on our part to present you all continually before the Lord, that He may keep you from falling, and preserve us all faultless to that day, when we shall meet before the throne of God, as we trust with exceeding glory." \*

\* Church Missionary Intelligencer, January 1852.



## CHAPTER XX.

### Many Years in an Hour-Glass.

"Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times, turning the accomplishment of many years into an hour-glass."—CHORUS OF "HENRY V."

THE events that chequered the life of Eleanor, in her new sphere of action, find their fitting place in the records of missionary labour, but would extend beyond the limits of these pages. The voyage was prosperous; and the meeting with her brother, and arrival at his station, was happily accomplished. Of the same spirit now with himself, her home was a happy one in the society of her sister-in-law and their children; and the experience gained by those who had worked so long, enabled her to surmount the formidable obstacles with which her work was at first surrounded; not the least of these being her ignorance of any language by which to impart an idea to those she came to teach. Few of them understood her

attempt it in the heat and difficulties of which you give an account.

“As I know you like to hear all our family news, I shall now give you a register of it, beginning by saying that my children are all well, and my little girl, your god-child and namesake, improving daily. She promises to be pretty, and has your dark eyes; indeed, without them, I should not have offered her to you for a child. It would have been quite unnatural to have an Eleanor with blue eyes, so it was well my lady took her papa’s, and not mine, for a guide. Amy is delicate, with much of her mother’s fragility about her, but this we hope she may outgrow. My eldest boy is a sturdy fellow, affording anxiety to no one, save as to what he may turn out; I sometimes think it will be no medium, but either very good or very bad; we will not judge him yet. At the old house, my father and the girls are all well, some of them most days with us. But I see changes coming. Ronald has lately fancied he ‘had a passion for the name of Mary,’ and has persuaded a lady who bears it of the fact, consequently my ‘singing bird’ will soon become a sailor’s bride; but we shall not lose her, for as Ronald must often be absent at sea for a long time together, his wife’s home will be between ours and my father’s house.

“We have had Juliana with us. She will have written you word of this herself; but she will not

tell you as I may, that she is all you would wish her to be, and it is touching to hear her speak of what she owes to you. She has stayed quietly and steadily with the Moores, who are kind people, and her pupils are much attached to her. She pays the money you gave her for comforts for her mother, who is therefore in no need whatever, having her own hundred besides. Juliana always goes to see her when she has a holiday, and we also claim a share. Mrs Harcourt remains at Hastings, but has comfortable cheerful rooms near the sea. I fear nothing will ever make her happy ; it can only come from a change in herself, of which there are no symptoms at present. My brother George, as you will have heard, has taken to himself a partner, in the person of our cousin Emma, my uncle's only child. It was a thing to be expected, as George is to inherit the whole of the business, which is very extensive, so they will be rich. We are all fond of our cousin, though not very intimate with her ; she is amiable, and good, and my only doubt is as to her having the strength and energy required for the wife of an iron man, with large responsibilities. But the household is a very happy one, and the old gentleman does little but sit by the fire, and hear from George how things are getting on. Harry, our admiral, is a lieutenant now, and never repents having gone to sea.

“ I think I have told you about every one, except Fox, poor old fellow. You know he was always a

dog of decided character, and the opinion to which he now (we may say it without any fear of wronging him) doggedly adheres, is evidently that you have disappeared by some unfair means, which he shall find out some day. He goes out with Amy, and Amy only, but the instant they come in he lies down on your sofa, which is his privileged spot, and thence narrowly watches passing events. He does not make himself generally agreeable, nevertheless is noticed by every one as they pass, because something that Mrs Hervey valued, and that now belongs to you. The rose is growing rapidly, and bids fair to cover the whole verandah before long, and"—

Mrs Hervey has turned the sheet and begun to cross. We can follow no longer, but one is certain there cannot be much more added if she intends Eleanor should read the letter, therefore she must very soon conclude; and we have probably gathered all the news, not only of the past and present, but of what may be expected as well.

It has been arranged that the marriage, of which mention was made in this letter, should take place when Ronald returned from his present cruise. He expected to remain longer on shore than usual, which would enable him to spend some weeks with his bride. The *Phoenix* was daily looked for; and as the wedding was to take place as soon as possible after her arrival, Adela had been for some time busy in superintending the necessary preparations for



Mary. The task in which she was so much interested was at length completed, and nothing remained but to wait for the ship's return.

At length she was telegraphed, and Mr Hervey and Captain Stevens went, as had been arranged, to meet Ronald at Portsmouth. In a day or two they all returned home, where a family party was assembled in both houses ; and before another week Mary Harcourt had become the sailor's bride.

They are gone, but not for very long ; and we stay, as is our wont, with the dwellers at Redleigh. They are a happy party ; and the sisters, seated together this winter evening, are hearing all that George and Harry have to say, concerning what they have been doing since they last went away.

And during those quiet conversations, George unfolds a plan which he evidently has much at heart : his wish to have one of his unmarried sisters to live with him. "I have long perceived" said he, "that a great field of usefulness is open among the families of the men employed in the iron works ; but Emma is not very strong, and the claims of a young family occupy all her time and energy. The men themselves we gentlemen can look after ; but the women would be the better for some one who would be a friend to them in trouble and sickness, and sometimes give them a little kindly counsel and advice. One of Adela's school *would suit me.*"

No one spoke for a minute, and then Charlotte said, "Do you think I should do, George?"

"Yes," replied her brother, "if you feel inclined to try; you are more sturdy than Louisa, and might not feel the change so much to our part of the country; you know well our air is not so pure as that of Redleigh."

"I should not mind that if I could be useful; and as Louisa and Mary will be with papa, and Adela close at hand, I could be spared very well."

"You would have it in your power to do much good, Charlotte, if that is an inducement. Our labourers' wives would often be thankful to have a lady able sometimes to go among them, and shew that she took an interest in their families; and who could put them now and then on better and more thrifty plans, all in a wise and gentle way, without appearing to interfere too much. We should be delighted to have you with us also, and of course you will be able to come here as often as you like."

And so it was settled that when Mary returned, and Louisa had a sister beside her, Charlotte should go to her brother's, and try how she liked a life of active benevolence in the iron districts of Old England.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### Labour and Anticipation.

"Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeopardized their lives unto the death in the high places of the field."—JUDGES v. 18.

"But should thy day descend in gloom,  
Should nought but faith attend thee to the tomb,  
Is it not scrolled upon the leaves of fate,  
God's high decree, though mystery veils the date?  
Yes! Thou and I in heaven's ambrosial bowers  
Its thrones, and principalities, and powers,  
Shall see from yonder empyrean height,  
The march of sunshine o'er the realms of night:  
Shall hear the shout by millions pealed abroad,  
The Morian's land hath stretched her hands to God."

HANKINSON'S POEMS, p. 316, 8vo Ed.

AS has been said, it is no part of our design to embrace in this narrative the "Foreign Service" of those whose histories have been related. Many and touching are the tales that come to the favoured homes of England from the tropical climate where they laboured; many the hopes and fears clustering round the quiet missionary settlements. The changing shadow and sunshine of our northern land may typify to us their earthly

life as well as our own. But however the daily record may vary, one thing remains the same, there are no regrets for the day when they went out, in love, to win souls for Christ; no shrinking from the difficulties; no doubting of the end.

And never, perhaps, have these high qualities of enduring devotion and dependence on divine strength been more severely tested, or more brightly evidenced, than in the mission of which Edward and Eleanor Harcourt were members. "The foundation of many a church, and pre-eminently that of Africa, has been the death of its Fathers in Christ."\* Many have gone hence without seeing the fruit of their labours; yet shall there be no regrets and no repenting. If one be removed, another will be raised up; for the work of the Lord shall go on to the end. In His strength is His banner planted; in His strength sustained, till it be His pleasure to commit it to another standard-bearer; and even, as has sometimes happened, from their day going down at noon, shall come no darkness; for glory unspeakable shines in His presence, and there shall be light, too, here below where the missionary laboured; light where the dark daughters of Ham rise up at the white lady's coming, and call her blessed.

Many are the voices which come from "the quiet resting-places, where repose the remains of the faithful brethren, whose death, as they yielded

\* Church Missionary Intelligencer.

one after another in the fearful struggle, laid the foundation of success. There sleeps in the Lord many a steadfast soldier of the cross, who laid down his life for the liberation of Africa ; who, with the unwavering intrepidity divine grace alone could give, went forward, and when sorrow came, repented not of having done so. It was such as they alone who won the commanding posts from whence future efforts might be carried forward. It was such as they alone who could undertake a mission conducted in the midst of danger and of death. Unless such had been found, how should the present position of the Church in Africa have been obtained ?”\*

While pointing to her missionary graves, she thanks her Lord for those His servants departed this life in faith and fear, and yet takes courage.

But there came a day when it was felt that long-taxed strength needed rest, and Eleanor has written to tell the Herveys that they might expect to see her before many months ; and not alone, for that her brother, with his wife and children, would accompany her to England.

This decision had not been lightly arrived at, nor had it been determined on till its urgency made itself too clear to be any longer put aside. John Harcourt's service had extended through a vigorous youth, and the best years of his life ; years of no easy labour. Let those who have

\* Church Missionary Intelligencer, July 1853.

formed the vanguard of an advancing army ; who have led a forlorn hope ; or during a protracted warfare against outnumbering foes, daily carried their life in their hand,—let such as these judge the work of the soldiers of another banner, who, marching against the powers of darkness, are the heralds to the heathen' of the kingdom which is at hand. But although Mr Harcourt had been spared when others had fallen, the long period of work had still told in such a manner as to shew that strength for future usefulness must be renewed in a healthier atmosphere, and its resources husbanded for a while. It was the same with Eleanor, who, however, having been preserved from any long or severe illness, looked hopefully to absence as the means which should enable her, after a short pause, to return with renewed vigour to the work which lay so near her heart.

They who watch the dealings of Providence, know well how often, when a true necessity arises, the way to provide for it becomes, it seems suddenly, made plain also. There is no miracle as in old days, no visible pillar of the cloud to mark the path. The possibilities come so gently, so gradually, so naturally, that it seems but the ordinary ways of men that have brought about what is called fortune, or a lucky coincidence. Those whose vision for the unseen is keener, discern the same guiding hand at whose will the ranks of Israel, flying from their enemies, and to all appear-

ance completely in their power, marched through the flood on dry ground, the "waters being a wall to them on the right hand and on the left." There had been a length of time when Mr Harcourt could not have considered himself in this matter without leaving his post unoccupied. Then, one of but very few, he had now become one of many, and had for some years enjoyed the assistance of a fellow worker, whose devotion equalled his own. They had also recently been joined by a tried and experienced missionary returning from a distant out-post. No doubt existed in the minds of those capable of judging, that their companion absolutely required the change proposed; and as there were many points by which the mission might be served through a visit of one of their number to England, they had no hesitation in pressing Mr Harcourt's return thither for a time at least, with his sister and family; all of whom would, it was clear, be benefited by the plan. Others were sufficient for a while to keep up the work, and attend to the schools, and they only entreated him to let them see him make the necessary arrangements. And there was one who had seen enough of Eleanor to know her true worth, and to feel that if allowed to look forward to her return, as the day when he might hope no longer to labour alone, it was all he desired for earthly happiness. Of this hope he had spoken without being enjoined silence, and in

this hope they prepared to part for a time. Thus many conflicting feelings mingled as Eleanor imparted the news of their speedy return to Adela. The letter being despatched, arrived in due time at its destination. Its way-worn look, and maritime inscription, had become familiar things to the Redleigh postman. Mrs Hervey was returning one beautiful spring afternoon, from a visit to an outlying cottage, when the messenger of "joy and grief" crossed her path, and received a kindly return of the respectful salutation, with which he greeted the pastor's wife. To day, however, he had that on his mind, which could not abide comfortably there, and with a pause and extra touch of his hat, he added, "Been at the Parsonage just now, ma'am, and left one of the foreign letters for you." He was rewarded by a bright smile, and as he marked the quickened footsteps, honest Jacob plodded on, feeling that something lay warmer at his heart, for, as he told his wife, when relating to her at evening the events of the day, "I guess there's not another man in the parish could have brought our good lady a pleasure like that."

But Adela went on rejoicing, and her thoughts flew across the intervening space to hold converse with Eleanor, who had thus been brought to her mind. She had long trained herself to repress the sigh which often rose at the thought of their separation; and now, as before, it was resolutely checked. Nay, to-day, she gained, as is sometimes allowed, a vision



of the land which is very far off; to feel the present but a moment, and the future grasped so faithfully, as to have become in very deed, "the substance of things hoped for." Beyond the meadows she was crossing, rose the woods forming the background to the landscape which surrounded her home; and as she looked up, and marked how the old trees were once more bursting into verdure and beauty, it was as though the angel of life had bid her spirit, like the beloved apostle, to "come up higher," and "be shewn things that should be hereafter." And the shadows of this world's sun, which lengthened around her, vanished before the dawning light of the resurrection morn, when parted ones should be reunited, knowing and known. So from the heights of Nebo looked out the Seer, over the fair hills of Canaan, to take note of a land good and beautiful; so, to those who ascend high enough, is sometimes vouchsafed a gaze into the King's country; but whereas the Prophet might not enter, but looking, lay down to die, these know that they shall one day possess that glorified vision, and having once admittance there, "shall go out no more, but be as pillars in the temple of my God," saith the Spirit.

Merry voices broke on Mrs Hervey's reverie as she approached her own gate, and a race ensued, the prize being to tell mamma first the news, of which they, like Jacob, knew the full value. And thus surrounded, Adela entered her dwelling, where on the table lay the letter.

What reverence surrounds the handwriting of a friend ! Not, however, as applied to the bulk of the correspondence of the present day,—to those chatty, gossiping, flighty notes, which fall in cheerful, and, in London, hourly showers behind the postman's tread, and have come to be regarded as one of the necessities of each day. For is not Her Majesty in effigy expected thus often at least at most of her true lieges' doors ? What can our grandfathers and grandmothers have done, when letters travelled slowly and wearily, costing too much to be lightly written, or lightly esteemed when received. It may be that our ancestors reflected more on what they wrote, and that their few pages would represent as fair an aggregate of sense and rational ideas as a good large budget of the present day. We may think, perhaps, they must have been dull enough ; but, at all events, they could not feel a loss they were not aware of, and very likely may have had for their letters more of the feeling which is akin to reverence.

In these days, it is those thin, compressed sheets of paper, which have travelled many thousand miles to reach us, that assume a power over the spirit the fashionable note can never possess. How eagerly they are looked for, how welcomed when they arrive ! How we look at every side, and linger ere we open them ! For we tremble in our joy. What will be the reading of that magic scroll to which we have the key ? Will our happi-

ness be felled at a stroke, or shall we smile on as we read? Is sunshine or cloud on that distant horizon? It was long since the last,—how much may have happened. It was long since this left them, how fare they now? And when in reassured serenity we have read, and read again, how we prize the sheets of paper that belonged to them, and are inscribed by the well-known peculiar characters, that come straight from among their own treasures, bearing still, perhaps, the well known foreign fragrance. They have been with the absent ones; they dwell now with us, guarded in some safe hiding-place, till the day comes when a hand pulls them forth, to whom they are only discoloured paper; their voices silent, their visions unseen, or at best but an old, old tale, long told and done with. But they once had our full and touching reverence.

Mrs Hervey has not waited for this digression to open her letter; and as she reads she smiles, and then suddenly turning round, exclaims, "Harry, make haste, put on your cap, and run quickly to tell grandpapa and aunts that Aunt Eleanor will soon be here." Then while the noisy but warm-hearted boy starts on his unexpected errand, the mother passes into another room, where, on a couch, placed so as to have a view of the garden and lawn, now bathed in the mellowed light of the setting sun, lies a pale, fair-haired girl, at whose feet is nestling our old acquaintance Fox. Mrs

Hervey enters with a composed step, that she may not startle in her haste; and holding the open letter which tells part of the tale, says in a quiet voice, contrasting curiously with the tear in her eye, "Amy, we shall see Aunt Eleanor before long."

The fears expressed by Mrs Hervey for her little step-daughter had been more than realised, who, instead of growing, as they hoped, into vigorous womanhood, had become a fragile invalid, confined to her sofa, with much suffering for her lot. Surrounded, as Amy had been, by those whose life was spent in active usefulness, the trial, when first she found herself deprived of all hope of taking her share, had been unspeakably bitter; so bitter, indeed, that but for her gentle mother's influence, it might have soured her temper, and marred the whole of a blighted existence. As it was, Amy's couch had been the one most peaceful spot of a family, where all dwelt in unity and love. Slowly, but surely, had the blessing been vouchsafed, which was now recognised by all. If Amy was in pain, the boys' shouts were hushed, nor heard again till, with her sweet smile, she could say she was better. The baby left off wailing when seated beside her, and committed to her care, to be soothed by a magic power into returning good humour. Every one loved Amy, and respected her too; and from her gentle patience, as many good lessons were gathered as from the

more bustling activity of some abler-bodied persons. Her room was a practical exemplification of service, as faithfully rendered by suffering as by well-doing; by waiting, as well as by working.

But suffering was not the staple of Amy's existence; and life, if not active, had at least a great share of passive enjoyment. All good news, all interesting events were detailed beside her, from the oldest to the youngest, all claiming and finding sympathy. Every letter from friends, each amusing book, was sure to lie on Amy's table before the day was over. The garden flowers were poured out beside her, that she might exercise her native taste in their arrangement, not for herself only, but for the rest of the house. Everything particularly to be enjoyed was carried to be doubled in the never-failing smile; and her own fingers ever fashioned curious and cunning workmanship, which supplied many a want, and pleased many a friend. All sunned themselves in Amy's countenance; and when, on a fine day, she was drawn out in her garden chair, the younger brothers and sisters asked no better pleasure than to bear her company.

For aunt Eleanor Amy had cherished affectionate remembrance, and the books which told anything of her adopted country had been eagerly read, to try and realize the scenes and people among which she moved. She remembered her as the kind friend to a little child, and looked up to her as the

pattern of all godliness, second only to her own dear step-mother, whose protecting influence was always round her. The two were therefore of one mind, as they rejoiced over the news now conveyed ; at the speedy return of one so often thought of and longed for.

“ Yes ; she will be here soon, Amy. See, we may look for her in September, and this is April.”

“ Four months, dear mother, still, and some days, which Harry may count. Fox, old dog, wake up and listen to the good news ; ah, mamma, only see, he will enjoy it as much as we shall, but he loses all the previous understanding and anticipating. It is strange how he can *remember*, yet not look forward.”

“ Because, my dear, being still but a dog, he is endowed only with the qualities of his kind. However, if he loses the anticipation, he would also be saved the disappointment, if such there were, if the hope were not realized. Amy, how should I bear it now !”

“ Well, dearest mother, well, as you do all things. But do not fear ; my instinct, for I am certain I possess this one fellow-quality with Fox, my instinct tells me this will all come true. You know how often you have called me your smooth prophetess, and then laughed to find me right ; so believe me now when I think Aunt Eleanor will come, and sit down here, and tell us all we have so often wished to hear about. And the rose,

mamma," she exclaimed with girlish eagerness, "do you remember the evening she planted it, and we all stood here so sad? It trails all over the verandah now, and may, perhaps, have some blossoms when they arrive. How little I thought, when able to run about, how many hours I should lie and watch them, or how much pleasure it would give me."

"We have often no idea, Amy, what will be a blessing in our future life. The things once prized may prove nothing worth, while those least thought of sometimes become of untold value."

Mrs Hervey was interrupted by the tumultuous entrance of Harry, whose cap had been turned into a lair for three young puppies; and who was closely followed by a younger brother and sister, and a large brown sporting dog; the whole party making the best of their way to the little sofa.

"See, Amy, only just look at Bertie's puppies. Adams shewed them me when I ran by; real beauties, are they not? And I am to have one for my own; just see now, and help me to pick out a good one." And Amy made room for them to be placed where she could see them and give an opinion as to their merits.

From the general rapture we must, however, except Bertie, who, particularly disliking Fox, and not at all satisfied with the state of her family affairs, stood whimpering and whining in a plaintive tone beside the couch. One of the most pro-

missing young dogs was chosen for Harry, who then remembered, on being asked by his mother, that he had delivered his message, and that Aunt Mary was coming. In truth, she came in as Harry went out, proclaiming his intention of immediately educating his dog for Aunt Eleanor, who doubtless could get nothing like such a black puppy in Africa; and he was closely followed by the little ones and Bertie, whose object in life was not to lose sight of him.

Aunt Mary sat down to hear the letter read, and talk it all over; and then Mr Hervey came in, and had to be told also; and so long did the conversation last, that in the end he suggested a hope they need not wait for the Africans to have tea, which seemed unthought of though the hour was past. This put an end to the discussion, but not before Adela had counted up her resources, and decided they must all come first to Redleigh, even if too many to stay altogether, in which case she had fixed on a house near, where Mr Harcourt and his family could live, while Eleanor stayed with her, to be nursed for a second time into health again.

And spring ripened into high summer, and still the rejoicing song of the house was, Aunt Eleanor is coming. Even the little ones, to whom she was but a name, were happy in the thought, which contained something, they were sure, exceedingly pleasant, though not understood. And then the cousins, as they were called, who were to come from Africa! On this point imagination took its



full flight: would they be white? would they be black? a deep nursery puzzle, warmly discussed by little tongues; a question at last gravely propounded to mamma, the reader of all riddles.

Blessed is the going out of many hearts to meet the returning one; worth while, perhaps, a weary exile, and a home-sick heart, to taste such a welcome once in a life. But the exile is not the secret. The receiver will have been hardly parted with elsewhere; be one of those who have a thousand greetings wherever their home has been for a while. Reader, if you would have such in keeping for you, remember it is neither the drone nor the self-pleaser to whom such a lot is given. If you would know something of the joy, you must prove yourself like Aunt Eleanor, an earnest and a gracious woman.



## CHAPTER XXII.

### Hopes Realised.

“For all Thy holy Christendom,  
All who to Thee in service come,  
For every church we bend the knee,  
And recognise their head in Thee.

“For Thine alone, and only Thine,  
Full in Thy love the church must shine ;  
And by Thine own all powerful ray,  
Complete Thou Thine elect, we pray.”

—OLD GERMAN HYMN. M.S. Translation.

WHEN the valleys of England stood so thick with corn that “they laughed and sang;” and autumn had laid her first golden touch upon the woods which we saw bursting into spring beauty, then, but not before, the long-cherished hope became a reality.

Adela and her husband went to meet the travellers, and accompanied them to London, where Mr Harcourt was obliged by business to go first of all. It was soon found that his stay there would have to be prolonged beyond the time they had anticipated; and it was therefore settled that

Eleanor should return home at once with the Herveys, and the rest of the party were to follow so soon as able.

During their parents' absence, Amy had been specially commended to Harry's attentions, and well had he fulfilled the trust. Her faithful squire out of doors, her constant attendant within, he now sat beside her, while they anxiously awaited the expected arrival, and kept each other quiet by talking of what has been, and what they hope will be. Harry wishes particularly for an exact description of Aunt Eleanor, but Amy shakes her head.

"I don't think I can tell you, Harry; you would never understand, no one does by being told; and besides, you will see for yourself very soon."

"Well, but you might just try, Amy; now is she anything at all like mamma?"

"Oh no! quite different, much taller; and then Aunt Eleanor's eyes have such a deep look, you feel they see something quite beyond one. I think she must be like the mountains I have read of, so beautiful and grand, but you never get quite up these, and the tops seem almost hid in heaven; only below where one can reach all is bright and pleasant. I do not call dear mamma like that."

"No; I'll tell you, Amy," exclaimed the boy, "what mamma reminds me of: I always feel with her, just as if I was out in the soft spring sunshine, that spreads over everything, till all is comfortable and happy."


Here, the watchful attitude of Fox's ears made them listen for coming sounds, which were soon heard rapidly approaching. As they drew nearer Fox threw off his slumbers, and sat erect; they came close, and there was a moment's pause, then every hair seemed to bristle with attention. Could it possibly be that for which he had listened so often in vain? The voice not heard for six long years, yet never forgotten? With a plaintive cry, and a beseeching look at Amy, he fled with one bound from the place where he had been lying, and through the open door, to the hall entrance. There might be seen standing a carriage, out of which Mr Hervey was handing a lady, whose face Fox kissed at a single leap, and round whom he then performed such marvellous frolics, that Bertie, who was gravely watching the gambols of her own family on the gravel walk, opened her half shut eyes to see what could cause such a change in conduct usually so quiet and well regulated.

He was soon picked up, and caressed to his heart's content; and shrieking with joy, and too excited to lie quiet, even in such keeping, he was carried into the house, only to be put down that Amy might be folded in a fond embrace, and Harry gain at last an idea of what the countenance he had striven to fancy was really like.

But why dwell longer on the meeting? Why listen by that hearth for the home outpourings of hearts which had found each other again? There

is joy in such hours in which the stranger has no part; a joy, which can be but a reflected one, to such as belong not to it. We will only wish, to those who have absent friends, a day when they may know by experience all that is left untold. To Fox alone that evening was one of trial; for how should he divide his allegiance in those unexpected circumstances? How shew that his heart, when drawn two ways, was still strictly true? He settled it to the best of his power, by taking up his permanent station at his lost mistress' feet; while from time to time he trotted up to the couch to be stroked by Amy, and wagging his tail, looked up with a repentant and wistful air, as much as to say, "Forgive me; but now she is come back, what else can I do?"

In ten days after Eleanor's return, the rest of the party arrived, to the great satisfaction of the younger members of the family, who had been on the stretch with anticipation. They were soon on cordial terms with the new comers, and a serious comparison of names and ages took place. There were Edward Harcourt the eldest, who was eleven, and Eleanor, his sister, nine; then came a second sister, named Alice after her mother. Alice was just six; the next was a boy called John, between three and four, and there was also a baby girl of nine months old. But, said Harry, "we needn't count her, she's nothing; she and baby Mary, our baby, can go together; then we're just equal.



There's me, I am ten you know, and Ronald's eight; and our Eleanor shall do for Alice, she's past six; Alfred and John, the little ones, can play together, and then there are the babies; so that's all right." Which indeed it appeared to be, if one might judge by the merry ring of voices that rose from the lawn and gardens, at all hours of the day. There seemed no end to the mirth; and if the English children were surprised to find the new play-fellows all white, their companions were not less astonished that nobody whom they saw was black.

The elders enjoyed themselves more quietly, but not less truly; they drew on the memories of the past in a way that the others could not do. Adela and John Harcourt had never seen each other since the evening he came to say farewell on leaving England; but they had not followed paths of their own devising, and could now meet as friends each with their cup of happiness full, and ready to acknowledge that the way by which they had been led had been the best. It was this which gave such perfect peace and contentment to their present family meeting, for such they called it. Eleanor had been for many a year their adopted sister, and the others brethren for her sake. Therefore was the rectory of Redleigh a right joyful place.

But things could not always thus continue, and *it* became necessary to decide on winter plans.

Mr Harcourt was likely to have much business in London, and spoke of moving his family thither : but Adela, taking advantage of his fifteen years' absence, drew hideous pictures of the fogs in which they would live, never seeing the sun, as she persuaded them, for months together, till she effectually frightened Mrs Harcourt, who had never been in England since she was a child, and who now pleaded so hard that their home should not be in the midst of such darkness and gloom, that her husband shewed symptoms of relenting. "But where then should it be?"

Adela had a plan, and soon led matters her own way, and to the house she had long since settled would do for them in the village. "Twenty minutes," said she, takes you to town. "Papa went daily for years, and you will be able to do the same if you wish ; then Alice can keep the children in this nice air, and they will soon look as blooming as mine. Best of all, you will be near us the whole time ; but Eleanor must promise to stay with us ; only say, dear friend, that this will do."

And so they agreed, only too glad, like other strangers, to have things settled for them ; and the next day, the house, after having been visited and approved of, was taken for the winter. By the beginning of October the whole party were comfortably installed, leaving Eleanor at the Rectory, as had been arranged.

But they were none of them idle, and those whom they had left behind were not forgotten. Mr Harcourt was fully engaged in translations of the Scriptures, the printing of which he was to superintend whilst in England, and smaller works for the schools and native Christians were also on hand. Many letters were received and answered, and Eleanor was diligent in acquiring a knowledge of various things which would prove useful to others when she returned. Thus, if absent for a while, their peculiar work was not lost sight of, though it did not prevent their doing good service to all others round them when opportunity offered. Eleanor also considered the recovery of her health a chief object, and therefore prudently refrained from overtaxing her strength, often spending the time, when others were absent on more active business, in quiet talk by Amy's couch satisfying her curiosity about her life in Africa and her friends there. Of an evening, too, stories on the same subject were in great request, and eagerly listened to by young and old.

"Indeed, Aunt Eleanor," said Amy, on one of these occasions, I assure you it will be of the greatest use to the Mission that you have returned, and that we can shew you alive and whole as when you went away, for to go to Africa is considered certain death. Old Mrs Raynton has never heard your name mentioned since you left, without shaking her head, and saying, 'Poor, poor thing, what a



pity to go and kill herself in that way.' She has been away all the summer, but think of her surprise when she comes back, and finds you all here : it will be quite a show for the old lady, and as you look pretty well, I hope she will give up saying 'Poor thing' at last."

"She may do so, as far as we are concerned ; I conclude Mrs Raynton does not support missions."

"Yes, in a certain way, she gives something occasionally as a duty, but she seldom comes to the meetings, because she doesn't like to hear of the people who are going. It is very well to give some money, but there is, she says, too much enthusiasm, and people's zeal really runs away with them, making them think they shall do so much good, and then they only die. Besides, she argues, there is no doubt the heathen will be converted some day ; therefore it will come to pass without those who can't do anything trying to help."

Eleanor smiled. "I remember, Amy, when I thought much the same myself ; nay, you need not look astonished, Uncle John," said she turning to her brother, who was one of the party assembled round the winter fire ; "Uncle John no doubt remembers when it was so."

"Yes," answered Mr Harcourt ; "but only to give one good hope that people may often change their opinions for the better. When the meeting comes, Amy, I'll just give a little roar, to shew people that if they will make a lion of an African mission-

ary, at all events it is a live one that they see. And yet," added he more gravely, "it would be worse than folly for any to go expecting to lead an easy life."

"Had you a very hard one then, Uncle John," asked Harry, who had been eagerly listening?

"I have not come home to make much of my own doings, Harry; but it was difficult enough to get on in the first years when we went out. I have known what it is to want food and shelter, and to think each day might be my last. The good soldier must be prepared to 'endure hardness.' Things are much changed at our station now, and you would be pleased to see the new church quite filled on Sunday with our people. And yet at the worst, our trials fell far short of those which were borne by the men who first carried the gospel to the heathen tribes. We went, and go now with fellow-labourers, and sympathy, and prayers, and can see the visible effects of others' toil; but what hearts must they have had who were the fathers of missionary work! Before such names as those of Egede, Swartz, Albrecht, and Williams, present efforts, with a Christian world to back them, and a door open to receive them, can only take a second place. On the muster-roll of faithful workers, they must ever have a deathless pre-eminence."

"I have often thought," said Mr Hervey, "that in them must have been the same undaunted love and resolution as possessed the apostle St Paul,

when he went forth in obedience to the command, 'Depart, I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles.' He went in no ignorance of what awaited him; for it is expressly added, 'I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.' Faithful to death was the apostle, faithful to death many a worthy follower in the same cause."

"Many a one, yet not losing their life, but finding it in the perfection of its immortality. Now we have not a few labourers who have been spared to the work for many years. It is true the bishops of Sierra Leone have been successively removed. The loss has been costly and sorrowful; but others will be found to stand in the gap."

"As is already the case; but their deaths have caused a panic, and made a melancholy and unfavourable impression."

"Naturally they could not fail to do so. Besides, when a bishop is taken from his sphere of labour, the whole Christian world re-echoes with the disaster; but of six or eight men who may go out at the same time with him, only those interested in their work know in most cases whether they live or die. Therefore, though more than half, or even a larger proportion, may be spared for long and useful labour, people generally are ignorant of the facts. In the last thirty years, the Church Missionary Society has sent out fifty-three Europeans, as missionaries, or catechists and schoolmasters, for whom they thus account in the published report of

the Society\* :—‘ 14 have died in Africa, or after their return home, from the effects of the climate; 1, after 28 years’ service; 1, after 19 years’ service; 2, after 16 years’ service; 1, after 8 years’ service; the others at earlier periods; 7 have retired after length of service, 15 to 21 years; 17 are still labouring in Africa; 2 elsewhere; 13 have retired from various causes, after 2 or 3 years.’ This embraces, too, we must remember, the first thirty years of the mission, when experience and knowledge have to be painfully gained. If not proving the climate favourable to Europeans, it may at least serve to shew that it is not infallibly fatal.”

“I had already remarked those statistics,” said Mr Hervey, “which refer, I believe, only to the Sierra Leone coast, with the Yoruba and adjacent territories. The statement takes no count of the extensive missions in other parts, carried on by our own and other branches of the Christian Church, and all characterised by the same spirit of devotion.”

“No; there are active, energetic men in many other parts. Sierra Leone was not originally considered the best spot for commencing a mission, but was occupied for want of other opening; and it is now plainly seen that no other place on the western coast of Africa can equal it in its position for extended usefulness. But, after all, if I have spoken specially of Africa, it is because it has been

\* Church Missionary Intelligencer.

our home, and peculiar corner of the vineyard ; but there is missionary work in more favoured climates for those who desire such, and feel called to take it upon them. In the words of our poet—

‘The world is all before them where to choose,’

at least for those who are free to do so. With many, the plain duty is to go no further than the near circle ; it may be their own parish, or perhaps only the home fireside, where their example and influence, if rightly used, may be as much missionary work as if they went to the further end of the globe.”

“Yes,” answered Mr Hervey ; “and I have been struck by some remarks which bear upon the subject in the very book I have in my hand. The writer is speaking of the scenes and conversations which accompanied our blessed Lord’s ascension ; and after quoting His last words, ‘And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost ends of the earth,’\* he comments on them thus :— ‘In these words Christ traces the circles in which Christian sympathy and activity should ever run : first, Jerusalem, their native city ; next, Judea, their native land ; then Samaria, a neighbouring country, inhabited by a race nationally detested by their countrymen ; and finally, the ‘uttermost parts of the earth ;’ they were neither to seek distant spheres first, nor to confine themselves always

\* Acts i. 7, 8.

at home ; but to carry the gospel into all the world, as each country could be reached.' And again he says, 'To the uttermost parts of the earth' are the last words on His lips, a startling word for His peasant auditors, accustomed to limit their range of thought within the Holy Land. But he had already said 'that all power was given to Him in heaven and in earth.' Did not the faith of some disciples reel under the weight of these words?"\*

"The remarks are much to the point," observed Mr Harcourt. "In this as in all other courses in life, we need the 'spirit of a sound mind' to help us to decide ; and to pray that to each it may be granted to have 'a right judgment in all things.'"

"I have often wondered," said Adela, who had hitherto been silent, "whether the collects and prayer-book services were written by old men. There is such an unspeakable beauty about them ; a chastened and subdued spirit, such as one thinks could only come with the age of a sanctified life ; and of which one never feels the force till one knows something at least of such a spirit one's self."

"At all events they were no children in grace," answered Mr Hervey. "Taken as a whole, nothing short of inspiration can exceed the simple grandeur of our liturgy ; the compilers indeed drank deeply of the 'spiritual rock,' and that 'rock was Christ.' As though with lips touched with a living coal from the heavenly altar, our church

\* "The Tongue of Fire," pp. 9, 10, by William Arthur, M.A.

leads her people to the throne of grace; or with the psalmist sings 'of mercy and judgment:' a song, as I once heard well observed, 'peculiar to this earth, for in heaven will be no judgment, in hell no mercy.' 'The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold.' We shall hear no higher strains till the praises of time shall be exchanged for the hosannas of eternity."

"Till the day," added Mr Harcourt, "when every branch of the church militant now on earth shall be brought together, no more many, but one; when every nation, and kindred, and language shall join in the cry, 'Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb,' and we shall realize, though now so often from our weakness, our jealousies, our faithlessness, unable to grasp its fulness, the truth, that 'the holy church throughout all the world doth worship God.'"



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### Christmas, and what the New Year brings.

"Give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity."

AND so Christmas came to the dwellers at Redleigh : beautiful Christmas, with its gracious memories, its glorious hopes, its loving-kindnesses, its tender mercies, its forgiveness of sins.

What is a country without a Christmas ? Those born in a Christian land, who dwell at home with their own people, cannot know. We cannot fancy what England would be without this, our high festival.

What it would be to have no angel's song, no glory in heaven, no peace on earth, no day-star from on high to lighten the darkness and the shadow of death.

We do not know. For with each returning season, through the length and breadth of the *land* go forth the rejoicing words, "Unto us a



child is born, unto us a Son is given;" and, oh hear it, ye captives, ye heavy laden, "He shall save His people from their sins."

Beside all the wailing and weeping of sorrow, the tumult and the discord of the world, there rises ever this wonderful strain, "Unto you is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Then the feast is set, and the Master saith, "Come." Then stand the gates of heaven open, and are not yet shut, that all who will may enter in.

And keeping this her Christmas memory of the day when her Lord came in mercy and in great humility, the church looks on yet a little while, to the time when He shall come again, for judgment, in great glory.

To the midnight, when she shall raise the cry, "The bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him!"

When she shall no more say, "Unto us a child is born," but, "Behold, the King is come!"

Soul, take thou heed. Earthly Christmases shall one day cease; will they leave thee with the hope, yea, the certainty of a place, even among the lowest of the royal train?

It was true Christmas at Redleigh.

True Christmas on the earth with its mantle of snow, and the holly-trees loaded with berries.

True Christmas in the church, where the "fir-tree, and the pine-tree, and the box-tree, together beautified the place of the sanctuary."

True Christmas in the hearts of those who met there, and kept the feast.

True Christmas in the portions prepared for the needy, in the loving-kindnesses which went round to all.

True Christmas by the fireside; to the elders blessed, to the children merry, to all a happy Christmas, with its Yule log, its family gatherings, its fairy presents, and its innocent mirth.

So Christmas passed once more again from Redleigh.

And soon, through the clear frosty air, the bells rung out the old year, which had brought some back to their native land; and rung in the new, bringing them they knew not what.

Surely, then, in the dead of that night, visions come and go before the children of men.

Visions of the past receding for ever; spirits of the future, though, like Job, they discern not the forms thereof; shadows on the curtain about to be drawn up; the phantasmagoria of life's dreams.

To each one their own. Those at Redleigh were bright and pleasant, for the winter was a happy one for all. Juliana spent a fortnight with the party, and it was with satisfaction that Eleanor marked the improvement in every way in her, and her earnest wish to do her duty where she was placed. Indeed, Mrs Moore wrote herself to say how much they valued Miss Harcourt's services to her little girls, "for did I not do so," said she,

“you would have no idea from her own account of all she is to us, or how much attached we are to her.” “I only wish,” said Eleanor, as she placed the letter in Mr Hervey’s hand, “that your mother could have seen the good results of her kind assistance in this matter.” Juliana would gladly have chosen for herself, had she been free to do so, the same course as her cousin, but Eleanor had always reminded her of her mother’s claim to having her sufficiently near to allow of their meeting occasionally, and of her going to her at any time she might particularly want her; and had clearly pointed out that the duty at hand is what is required of each, and must be performed first, before others further off, and perhaps better liked, are sought for—

“Careful less to serve Thee *much*,  
Than to please Thee perfectly.’

For this reason, though Adela would gladly have kept her at the rectory the whole of her holidays, she left them at the end of the fortnight for Hastings, that she might spend the remaining three weeks with her mother, before returning to her school-room duties, which, however, was no irksome prospect; “for,” said she, “how fortunate I am in having nothing but a sort of home wherever I go.”

The African children enjoyed the winter exceedingly, and seemed benefited rather than hurt by the cold. The running and scampering about all

day with English companions was like a new life to them, and to the latter their extreme surprise at the snow and ice, and other wonders of the (to them) foreign country, was matter of continual amusement. But, on the other hand, the Harcourts had their strong points, and could tell tales of scenes and people such as the others had never dreamed of; many an evening in the dusk they crouched together by the school-room fire, listening to and telling each other endless stories, with Sambo (so Harry's young black dog had been named) curled up between the boys.

In this way, before many weeks, Harry and his sister had become acquainted with the names of all the people and places familiar to their companions; till they were sure they could quite fancy the house they lived in, and the church and the school full of black people. "Yes," Harry said, "he could just see it all; but I say, Edward, who's Mr Landen?"

Three or four voices answered the question in the same breath, with varied information about Mr Landen. Mr Landen was a clergyman; Mr Landen had a church they once went to see; Mr Landen taught an old woman to read; Mr Landen was very good natured. But the remark apparently considered most descriptive of that gentleman was, that he was the person who was always talking to Aunt Eleanor.

But it was only among the younger people

that the name thus suddenly challenged was a strange one. From Adela and her husband Eleanor had no secrets, and even Amy had sometimes heard portions read of the letters written in a certain bold firm hand, which always appeared gladly welcomed.

The three houses had many visitors during the spring. Charlotte spent some weeks at her father's, and George with his wife also came for a time, though they could not remain absent long. The arrivals most exciting, however, were those of the two absent sailors. Harry came first, with only two months leave, and soon after him Ronald arrived for a longer stay on shore, to the great delight of his wife, who met him with the baby born during his absence in her arms. The baptism had been deferred until the father's return, and took place in May. The little girl was named "Adela Harcourt," after her two godmothers, and her godfather, Mr Harcourt. "This," said Mary, "solves the difficulty about the names; otherwise grandpapa declared we should have to call her 'Eleanor Johanna,' as well as Adela. And though two names are sometimes useful, I really think three too much of a good thing for any but princesses."

"It spares us the perplexity, too, of deciding by which of her three aliases she shall be generally known," added Ronald. "Yes, two names are enough for my maiden, if only others are satisfied."

This they declared themselves to be. "If she only turns out half as good," continued her father, "what a blessing it will be; however, at all events I must make the best of her such as she is;" and as happily the baby, already six months old, was a sturdy lively child, that delighted in its papa's tossing and play, Ronald's happiness in his little daughter was without alloy.

He was also pleased to renew his acquaintance with Eleanor, of whom he had seen very little, since the days spent together at his mother's. He had much to ask, particularly, if she still wound skeins of silk? and whether, "when there were any knots, she ever broke them now?" The recollection raised a merry laugh between them, and Eleanor said, that she could not say she liked tangled skeins much better than formerly, "only they are not too much for me now, and I get through them better than I used." Ronald said he saw little change in his old friend, and thought her quite as handsome as before. Indeed, the bracing air had done so much for her, during the eight months they had been at home, that, though perhaps she had rather less colour than in former years, still there was nothing of a delicate or suffering look about her.

Mr Harcourt had been, since the beginning of the year, diligently engaged with the translation; and business connected with the work took him often to London, whence he returned in the evening

to his family. One day that this had been the case, Eleanor met him at the Rectory gate with her hands full of papers.

"Letters, John, from all our people, and good news in them; Alice has her own peculiar budget, and here are yours. She left them with me to give you when you came, as she and Mary are out with the children, and will not be back before tea time."

"They are welcome," answered her brother, "and may help to decide many points on which I must soon make up my mind. Let us stay and read them under the trees; even we must allow it to be warm to-night. I had forgotten it could be so hot in England even in July."

He had seated himself, and already opened one of his letters. It was therefore more to herself than him that she spoke, as, placing herself on the turf beside the garden bench, she said, "July; nearly a year since we left home; how short a time it seems, and yet only six weeks later we were just leaving."

"Here is something for you to read," said her brother. "It is not to me, as you will see; you have finished your own, so it will interest you. Such evidences of life and faith give good hope for any infant church."

And so she read, sitting silently beside him, as follows. The letter was from liberated Africans of the Ibo nations, or their descendants :—



“ We, among whom are chiefly to be found those who are natives of Onitsha, and the adjacent parts of the Ibo country bordering upon the Niger, and their descendants, beg most respectfully to tender our sincere and heartfelt thanks at the movement which Providence has caused your Society to make, in establishing a mission on the banks of the great Niger.

“ While we could not but, as Christians, glory in the success which has attended the labours of your Society in the Yoruba country, yet our hearts have been still more cheered from the fact that Christianity has begun to dawn in our own native land.

“ We look with eagerness for the arrival of our respected friend, the Rev. J. C. Taylor. We wish him God-speed in the work in which he has laboured, and to which, we trust, he will soon return ; and as a slight evidence of the deep sense of gratitude we feel towards your society, which, under the hands of Providence, has been instrumental in spreading the glad tidings of the gospel to the heathen of Africa, we have collected, by subscriptions, a small sum, amounting to £54, 6s. 2½d., which we respectfully place at the disposal of your Committee, to be appropriated in any manner you may consider most advantageous towards the promotion of the Niger Mission.

“ We have been encouraged in presenting you with this trifle by the fact, that, in the establishment of such an infant mission, there would neces-



sarily be many objects of an insignificant nature to which it might still be usefully applied ; and we trust there will never be wanting here many sons of Africa, both young and old, blessed with the privileges of Christianity and civilisation, who will be ready and willing to go forth, sacrificing all objects of a pecuniary nature, cheerfully to accept the repeated cries of their fellow-brethren and kinsmen, ‘ Come over and help us.’”\*

“ Yes,” continued Mr Harcourt, as he closed the last of his own letters, “ the thing speaks for itself ; there is life in the plant which brings forth fruit. The good seed, wearily sown in tears and often in death, has not been lost, and many reapers, may we hope, come with joy, and bring their sheaves with them ; reapers, too, of Africa’s own children, for the native ministry which is springing up, aided by the catechists and schoolmasters, is the great matter of rejoicing for those who have the subject at heart. Their letters are written in a spirit which leaves no room to doubt of their sincerity. And now, Eleanor, what news have you ?”

“ Some that you must have heard about, too, already, and that I wished to talk over together, which was the reason of my coming out here to meet you. Mr Landen wishes to know if we are likely to return at the end of the year, as proposed. He will have told you that it is now quite decided that he will go to the new station which is to be

\* Church Missionary Intelligencer.

formed; and this, he thinks, will be early in the spring."

"So he tells me, and I had already heard that it was settled; I am sorry for you, Eleanor."

"I am ashamed to think how sorry I have felt for myself; but it will not do. It is no question of what we should find most agreeable, but of what has to be done, and who can do it best? There is no doubt of Mr Landen's qualifications for the task, and we shall not be quite alone; but what as to our longer stay here?"

"We shall have to consider the matter seriously, The work I have in hand will take much longer than was thought. There is a difficulty now, and will be for some months. Then we shall have enough to occupy us for a year and a half, at least, before it is finished. This would be too long a delay for you, and involve much trouble, as the new station will be far from ours. Besides, our own arrangements were not made with a view to so long an absence. It might be well for me to go out for a short time, leaving Alice and the children here, in which case you could go with me; otherwise, I suppose, we should have to look for friends whom you could accompany."

"Which I should not like half as well; and Alice will grieve over the other plan; either way there must be some trial."

"Yes; but surely if our prayers for increase of *grace* are anything more than idle words, we shall

have therein strength to meet all troubles when they arrive. You are not beginning to be faint-hearted now, Eleanor."

"No; not faint-hearted, nor yet double-minded, I hope. It is only the little foxes again," added she playfully. "And see, here come all the party, and Adela calls to the hospitalities of her round table, which will be more than full, for every one is here to-night."

Rising as she spoke, the brother and sister joined the merry party; and doubts and fears were laid aside for a time, to enjoy the present. The whole family met at the Rectory, that all might spend the last evening with Harry, who was to join his ship the next day. There was old Mr Edgerton with Louisa and Charlotte, George and his wife, Mr and Mrs Harcourt, Henry himself, Adela and her husband, Eleanor, Mary, and Ronald, besides Amy, and of younger children eight.

"Only two more to make the proper number for the round table," said Adela, "king Arthur's at least, for mine not being of such regal dimensions, I have sent the noisy ones of our party to another."

"It wouldn't be quite impossible to make up the orthodox number," exclaimed Ronald; "if you, Adela, will send for baby Mary, I'll go and fetch my daughter, which will make it just right."

"I beg you'll do nothing of the kind," remonstrated his wife, "one thing is certain, that nurse wouldn't allow you if you wished; your daughter

has been sound asleep this hour, and you will have to defer your premature intention of bringing her out. Besides, it wouldn't be fair after all, as there is a third family baby, so that we should be one too many; better leave well alone, Ronald."

"Most true, O wise wife; my apology must be the having but one; now these people who have all three or four apiece here, of course, need not think of Number five or six in the nursery."

"Ah, Ronald," said Henry, who had just entered, "that last speech shews your utter inexperience in the ways of woman's world at least. Now, I know better; last year, I went down to the station, where my ship was, in a vessel carrying Queen's troops; we had several officers on board with their families. The youngsters and I were capital friends, and I always found I was welcome to the whole kit, excepting only the Benjamins; but the minute I touched one of them, I was pursued by mammas and nurses exclaiming, 'O Sir, please, not the baby.' 'O Mr Hervey, indeed, you must not take baby.' I might have had the others for good and all if I had wished."

"Well, Harry," answered Adela, "I doubt your wisdom being much deeper than your neighbour's. Roland, where do you intend to sit?"

"I am not quite certain; I feel put down among my betters, and incline to join the lower table, if only the cheer is good. What have they got, Adela?"

“The abundance of plenty, and over and above, a plum-cake of Aunt Eleanor’s own making.”

“Indeed; why, I had no idea, Aunt Eleanor, you had gone into the baking, or are we only to say the confectionary, line?”

“Perhaps not; but that is one of my new achievements. I have been industriously taking lessons till I flatter myself my bread and cakes will bear the test of eating, when people are kind enough to try them.”

“Which I shall be happy to do; but, Aunt Eleanor, do you really go out to Africa to make cakes?”

“Well, we do not live exactly for that purpose, but as people will eat bread, and like cakes, one may as well have them good as bad, which I am not likely to get unless I know how to teach others; meanwhile, knowledge is not burdensome, and this is only one of many things which will prove very useful.”

The subject of the letters was not mentioned that evening, but discussed at a later period with Alice, who was the third party interested, and at the end of a week, Mr Harcourt’s plan was agreed upon; that he should return for a short time, taking Eleanor with him, while his wife and children remained in their present cottage, where she would have the society of kind friends. When quite settled, Adela was told; but Eleanor, to prevent its appearing sudden, had prepared the way by various

hints and suggestions, which had not been lost, and she was not therefore taken quite by surprise.

"I see it is the best way," said she, "and of course know we must part sooner or later; and a year was the time first mentioned. It will be a trial, however, to Eleanor to leave her old home, and go to a new one, where everything has to be begun; your own school too, and all the people you know so well."

"Yes, one cannot but feel it in some measure; we must look forward hopefully to the time when new interests shall have become old ones in their turn. The people have been most anxious to have the missionaries among them, though till now the thing has been utterly impossible."

"I am glad at all events we shall have Alice and the children close to us, and we will make her as happy as we can."

"I am sure of that," said her husband; "and indeed, without such a certainty, I hardly know how I could have left her in the foreign country this is to her; but among you all here, the time will pass sooner than she thinks."

"Oh yes," answered Alice, trying to smile, though the effort was evident, "I am quite brave about it, and John has more than once been away longer even than four months, and exposed to far greater dangers; I can trust him to the same care which has brought him back to us before. In the *end too*, I am sure our longer stay in England

will be of use to the children. Eleanor's removal from our old haunts is the only real cloud to all."

"However," said John, laughing, "as she does not ask our pity, you can keep it for those who want it, Alice. In the mean time make ready all of which you wish us to be the bearers for our ancient homestead and people."

There was much preparation after that: first, letters to be written, and then, when the answers came, many commissions to be executed and purchases made. The conversation related took place in the middle of July, and by the first week in October, John and Eleanor hoped to leave. The latter had an endless list of things required in her new sphere of usefulness, and she, with either Adela or one of the other sisters, spent many hours in London, engaged in the weary length of work known familiarly as "a day's shopping."

But at last all was completed, and a little time yet left for the quiet finishing of home arrangements. Among these was the sorting and tying up with proper labels garden seeds of all kinds. "I don't know what will succeed," said Eleanor; "but I shall put everything in, and hope something may come up. And take care of the wild flower packets too, Harry; if I am so fortunate as to have a garden, they shall have a choice place, if only they will grow, though I sadly fear not."

"Have you got a house, Eleanor," asked Mr Edgerton, who was standing beside them.

"No, sir, not yet; but it will not take very long to build, I daresay. Not a very magnificent one, you know, but something of the kind that will do."

"And a church and school; how do you expect to get these?"

"It will take longer; but as the people are very anxious to be taught, we shall look on to the time when they will try and build one for themselves. They are very earnest when once they value the truth taught them. The school will follow the church, perhaps even precede it. You see we draw largely on faith and hope."

"And hope of the right kind is a heavenly gift, which 'maketh not ashamed.' Harry, give me a pen and ink, will you?" The old gentleman took a book from his pocket, and, after writing a few seconds, placed a piece of paper in Eleanor's hand. "My dear," said he, "it is now many years since you first came to my home, and I numbered you among my daughters. To them I have given before this the same as I now give you. It will help to build the church, if you like to make that use of it."

The gift was a cheque for a hundred pounds. Eleanor's eyes glistened. "It is indeed kind, sir; but I already owe you more than I can reckon. It will probably altogether build our church, and the school as well. One of the last new churches, sufficient for the wants of the place, cost only forty pounds; ours may be larger, if it seem expedient,



and still leave a surplus. We do not require such large sums as in this country. If the king or chiefs have invited the missionaries, they are quite willing to give the ground, and materials are not difficult to procure. We hope the station may become a commercial one, as the people are quite alive to the advantages to be gained, and have plenty to offer the traders. If they were but Christian men, who would carefully avoid bringing reproach on the name they bear, the advantages would be untold, and each in his calling might become an evangelist as well as a civiliser. However, we have much ground to win first; but though we may wait long, the day will come when a church will be wished for and valued."

"We will not doubt it; and what will it be called?"

"Christ Church, sir, if I have a voice. The first church in a heathen town ought to bear no other name."

"You are right, my dear; and now I must be going home. I shall not live long, but the blessing of an old man rest on Christ Church, its builders and its worshippers;" saying which, without waiting for any reply, Mr Edgerton left the room, and the next moment was walking quietly down the gravel walk, in the direction of his own house.

The days passed quickly, bringing at length the first week in October. Then, with earnest fare-

wells, again the brother and sister went forth together.

Once more the good ship spread her sails to the wind, followed by many prayers and blessings. Once more poor human hearts throbbed with the pang of separation; and once more taking comfort, dried their tears, commending themselves, and all they loved, to the mighty hand, and the tender mercies, which had led them all their life long, and would be faithful even unto the end.

So our story finds its close; and with a few words more, we take our leave of those whose history we have been tracing.

But some may like to know, that before another Christmas, happy letters brought good tidings of those who had left in October. An unexpected visitor, too, had appeared at Redleigh: no other than Edward Vernon, driven home to take a rest from incessant toil, and rejoicing to think he should find the Harcourts there. He arrived only to hear they had sailed a month previously, and that thus he had missed seeing his old companion and play-fellow Eleanor, to whom he had long since become a valued friend. But there was John's return in the spring to look to, and, meanwhile, he came to see Mrs Harcourt, with whom he was already acquainted. By her he was, of course, introduced at the Rectory, where, for the sake of *others*, he was at once considered as a friend, even

before his own high character and personal worth had gained him a place in their esteem, as was the case before long ; he often paid them a visit, and his presence served in some measure to fill the gap in their circle. In the spring, John Harcourt stood once more among them, safely restored to his family, and anxious to resume his work which was waiting for him. Eleanor's pleasant letters more than reconciled all to her absence, and they felt that her visit had been the means of their knowing each other better, as also of enabling those at home to enter with greater interest into the details of her everyday life.

Mary continues to live with her father, making the house bright and cheerful. Charlotte is frequently with them, but remains principally at her brother's ; she is known among his work-people as one whose presence always brings comfort in sorrow or distress, and George's house contains a happy and united family.

Amy's couch continues to be a gathering point for all, and Fox, who is nearly blind from age, is always to be found curled up beside her. He has lost the spirit to be even cross, and only when his young mistress speaks to him does he in return whine and lick her hand. Poor Fox, the last parting nearly broke his heart, and but for Amy's care he must have died for love of her whom he would so gladly have bitten, the first night they met at Holly Lodge.

Mrs Wood and Mrs Timms live together, made comfortable by Eleanor's annuity; and recalling all she said and did, besides hearing of her occasionally, now forms great part of the old women's happiness.

Edward Vernon is returning to his post, where, after many years of apparently fruitless labours, a rich harvest seems likely to be gathered in. He does not go alone: Louisa Edgerton has become the missionary's wife, and her sisters have no wish to hold her back, while rejoicing that she goes to a better climate than that in which Eleanor's lot has been cast. No bitterness mingles with the thought of those absent from them; they hope to meet again, even in this world; but if not, they know they shall see them in the day when each shall 'rest and stand in his lot,' when

"Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever"—DANIEL xii. 2, 3.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### *The Conclusion of the whole Matter.*

"O most blessed mansion of the city which is above! O most clear day of eternity, which night obscureth not, but the highest truth ever enlighteneth!

"To the saints it shineth glowing with everlasting brightness; but to those that are pilgrims on the earth, it appeareth only afar off, and as it were through a glass."

"**T**HE noble love of Jesus impels a man to do great things, and stirs him up to be always longing for what is more perfect.

"Love feels no burden, thinks nothing of trouble, attempts what is above its strength, pleads no excuse of impossibility; for it thinks all things lawful for itself, and all things possible.

"It is therefore able to undertake all things, and it completes many things, and warrants them to take effect, where he who does not love would faint and die.

"Love is watchful, and sleeping slumbereth not.

"*Though weary, it is not tired; though pressed,*

it is not straitened; though alarmed, it is not confounded; but, as a lively flame and burning torch, it forces its way upwards, and securely passes through all."

*Imitation of Christ.*—THOMAS À KEMPIS.

"LET YOUR LOINS BE GIRDED ABOUT, AND YOUR LIGHTS BURNING;

"AND YE YOURSELVES LIKE UNTO MEN THAT WAIT FOR THEIR LORD, WHEN HE WILL RETURN FROM THE WEDDING; THAT, WHEN HE COMETH AND KNOCKETH, THEY MAY OPEN UNTO HIM IMMEDIATELY.

"BLESSED ARE THOSE SERVANTS, WHOM THE LORD, WHEN HE COMETH, SHALL FIND WATCHING."

LUKE xii. 35, 36, 37.



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